FRIDAY
April 19, 2024

BENGALURU
CITY EDITION
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EC INTERVENTION

Bengal Governor calls off Cooch Behar visit

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THOUSANDS EVACUATED

Volcano erupts in Indonesia

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NEP AT ITS CORE

Anganwadi curriculum to be activity-based

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Targeting terrorists outside the border

Is it justified? What are the laws?

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THRILLING CONTEST

Mumbai pips Punjab in a humdinger

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India votes from today; 102 seats, 16 cr. voters in Phase 1

Voting will be held for all 39 Lok Sabha seats of T.N. as well as several in Rajasthan, western U.P., M.P.; NDA looks for a third straight term, while INDIA bloc is hoping to upstage the ruling alliance

Sreeparna Chakrabarty
NEW DELHI

Over 16 crore voters will exercise their franchise on Friday as the 2024 general election, the world's biggest exercise in democracy, kicks off with 102 Lok Sabha constituencies going to the polls in the first phase.

While the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) is looking for a third straight term in office, after successes in the 2014 and 2019 elections, the Opposition Indian National Developmental, Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) is hoping to stop the ruling alliance in its tracks.

The BJP is seeking a vote for a *Viksit Bharat* (developed India) by highlighting its 10-year rule under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while the campaign of the Congress – the largest party in the INDIA bloc – has revolved around issues of unemployment, inflation, misuse of Central agencies and threats to the democratic and secular fabric of the country.

The first lap: Polling officials carrying EVMs and other election material cross the Brahmaputra by a country boat at Baghmora village in Majuli district of Assam on Thursday. RITU RAJ KONWAR

The first of the seven phases of the election, which will culminate on June 1, will also see the highest number of constituencies going to the polls.

All 39 Lok Sabha seats of Tamil Nadu and five seats of Uttarakhand, 12 seats in Rajasthan, eight crucial seats in western Uttar Pradesh, and six seats in Madhya Pradesh are among those going to the polls on Friday.

A total of 1,625 candidates – 1,491 men and 134 women – are in the fray.

Voting will also be held in ethnic violence-hit Manipur and Naxal-affected Bastar in Chhattisgarh. In the Inner Manipur seat, polling will be held on Friday as well as on April 26, during the second phase.

Assembly polls

Polling will also be held for 92 Assembly seats in Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim, where Assembly elections are being held.

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MORE REPORTS
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Impossible to tamper with EVMs at any stage: EC in SC

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) on Thursday said it is impossible to tamper with electronic voting machines (EVMs) "at any stage" even as the Supreme Court reserved its judgment on pleas that 97 crore registered voters in the country have a right to a more transparent electoral system, with or without EVMs.

The assurance from the top poll body that EVMs were "perfect" came on the eve of the first phase of the Lok Sabha election.

A Bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta chided petitioners, including the Association for Democratic Reforms, that "it was not good to be over-suspicious about everything".

The two days of marathon hearing saw ideas ranging from returning to paper ballots to bar codes for individual candidates and having more translucent peepholes on Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPATs) swirl through in the courtroom.

Advocate Prashant Bhushan and senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, appearing for petitioners, highlighted the fundamental right of the voters to confirm that their vote has been cast right.

The court was hearing petitions seeking cross-verification of 100% EVM votes with VVPAT paper slips. Currently, cross-verification of EVM-VVPAT happens only in five randomly selected polling booths in a constituency.

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EVMs and other material being sent to polling booths for parliamentary elections from the taluk office in Vellore on Thursday. VENKATACHALAPATHY C.

Reports of EVM error false: EC

NEW DELHI
The EC has told the Supreme Court that statements that four EVMs erroneously logged in votes in favour of the BJP during mock polls held in Kerala were false. » PAGE 11

NEARBY

RGUHS to issue QR code-based admission tickets

BENGALURU
To avoid impersonation during exams, the Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences (RGUHS) has decided to introduce QR code-based admission tickets. » Page 2

'Five out of six city candidates have criminal cases'

BENGALURU
Five out of the six candidates from national parties — the BJP and the Congress — contesting from Bengaluru, have criminal cases filed against them, according to a BPAC report. » Page 4

METROPLUS » PAGE 7

Double murder in J.P. Nagar park

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 46-year-old man allegedly stabbed his female friend to death and minutes later he was killed by the mother of the victim at Sarakki Park in J.P. Nagar on Thursday.

The deceased have been identified as Suresh, a resident of Goraguntepalya, and Anusha, 25, a resident of Shakambarinagar in J.P. Nagar.

According to the police, Suresh and Anusha worked in an event management company. They had known each other for five years. Anusha quit the company and started working in a private firm.

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Councillor's daughter stabbed to death on Hubballi college campus

The Hindu Bureau
HUBBALLI

In a shocking incident, Neha Hiremath, daughter of Congress councillor of Hubballi-Dharwad Municipal Corporation Niranjan Hiremath, was stabbed to death on the campus of her college in Hubballi on Thursday. The accused who fled from the scene was arrested by the police subsequently.

Neha Hiremath was a first year MCA student at KLE Technological University and the youth who stabbed her multiple times on campus was her classmate.

The assailant intercepted her on the university campus and stabbed her multiple times leaving her profusely bleeding on the ground as several students watched in shock. He then fled the scene only to be apprehended later by Vidyanagar Police. Some of the students and staff of the university immediately rushed her to hospital, where she died of injuries.

Neha Hiremath was a first year MCA student.
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Arrested

Police Commissioner Renuka Sukumar told *The Hindu* that the accused, identified as Fayaz, has been arrested. She said that according to him they were friends from their PU days and were in love but of late she had started avoiding him. He admitted to stabbing her unable to bear the insult.

Demonstration

Meanwhile, several students staged a demonstration in front of KLE Technological University under the aegis of ABVP seeking stringent punishment for the accused.

Late on Thursday night, members of Hindutva outfits staged an agitation in front of the Vidyanagar Police Station urging the police to hand over the accused to their custody leading to an argument for some time.

One of the 17 Indian crew members of Iran-seized vessel returns home

Kallol Bhattacherjee
NEW DELHI

One of the 17 Indian sailors aboard the Portugal-flagged *MSC Aries* that was detained by the Iranian authorities last weekend has returned home in Kerala, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has announced. Ann Tessa Joseph, a resident of Thrissur, was welcomed at the Cochin International Airport by government officials when she arrived from Iran on Thursday.

"The Indian Mission in Tehran remains seized of the matter and is in touch with the remaining 16 Indian crew members of the container vessel. The crew members are in good health and in contact with their family members in India," said the MEA in a press release saying that it is trying to ensure the well-being of the Indian sailors in Iranian custody.

Ann Tessa Joseph, a deck cadet who was onboard the seized vessel on her arrival at the Kochi airport in Nedumbassery on Thursday. PTI

Iran had earlier claimed that the cargo vessel had "violated international maritime law".

Speaking to *The Hindu* on Thursday, Iran's ambassador to India, Iraj Elahi said, "The Indian sailors are not detained. They are at the disposal of the ship's captain. We are in direct contact with the Indian Embassy in Tehran and the Indian citizens are in very good condition. They haven't been able to come to the beach yet due to the bad weather and stormy sea. They are free and can leave Iran whenever they like."

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'MEDIATORY ROLE WELCOME'
» PAGE 14

Meg Lanning and the devastating toll of success on auto-pilot

The former Australian captain, in a podcast recently, revealed that she had a complicated relationship with food and exercise, a timely reminder of how easy-to-miss eating disorders can be and how they impact mental and social health

GETTY IMAGES

Lavanya Lakshminarayanan

For many in the cricketing community, calling Meg Lanning a former Australian cricketer still feels a bit unreal. Her speech outside the Melbourne Cricket Ground – the venue of her coronation as the captain of the T20 world champion side in 2020 and where she announced her retirement from international cricket late last year – felt like it had gaping holes, with many wondering why Lanning had chosen to bow out at the peak of her dominance in world cricket.

Multiple sabbaticals for previously undisclosed health reasons paved the way for a retirement at the unusual age of 31. On Thursday, in a podcast –The Howie Games – the notoriously private Lanning decided to bare what life over the past 24-odd months looked like and how a perfectionist like her coped with often imperfectly.

"My head was spinning a fair bit for a number of reasons. Motivation was probably one and this was after the One-Day World Cup we won in 2022 New Zealand," Lanning explained to Mark Howard, the show's host.

"At that point, we'd won everything and that World Cup was the end of a journey which began with what happened in the 2017 edition (where India knocked out Australia in the semifinal). I probably didn't realise it at the time but it was the end of a phase. The motivation was not there in the lead up to the Commonwealth Games even, for training. I guess it was about the commitment levels more than anything else."

"Touring can be lonely. Within a team, lots of people are around but you spend a lot of time by yourself especially as captain.You get a few negative thoughts about what you're doing or where you're heading. I got to a point where I really didn't enjoy it. Through the CWG, I struggled a fair bit. Somehow I could get out there, block it out and still play quite well. I didn't know if that was a good or a bad thing. It actually became a distraction - the games, because I couldn't think about anything else," she said, talking about how cricket - the sport that came naturally to her - helped her function on auto-pilot.

"Every decision I've made all along was based around cricket. I was happy to do it but I was (increasingly) starting to question if I wanted to keep doing it anymore."

Lanning pressed the pause button and went on to embrace life as a barista - a massive difference from the high-pressure existence of being one of Australia's most successful athletes.

"The sporting bubble is great. There's so many good things. You get a lot of support and there are incredible opportunities but it's not the real world. You get a lot of things done for you. You don't make a lot of decisions for yourself and it's extremely structured, which is good in a lot of ways, but I just feel like I was not equipped in any way to go out into the real world and function."

She chuckles about not graduating to the coffee machine, spending time taking orders and doing the dishes instead.

"At that point I thought, 'Ah maybe I'll go back to cricket (*laughs*).'"

And return she did. Lanning featured in Australia's ODI tour of Pakistan in January 2023, led Australia to victory in the T20 World Cup in South Africa - the last World crown she would claim - and participated in the inaugural edition of the Women's Premier League, leading Delhi Capitals to the final. Through it all, Lanning was her clinical self with the bat.

She registered scores of 67 and 72 vs Pakistan, accumulated 149 runs including three 40+ scores in the T20 WC and finished with the orange cap in the WPL with 345 runs in nine games.

Her performances happened despite the chaos in her head and she adopted an eventually debilitating coping mechanism to deal with the lack of control she experienced when not on a cricket field.

Over-exercising and under-fueling

"I love exercise and I think I went a bit overboard because it was my coping mechanism. I loved to put on my headphones and go for a run. But it got a bit out of control. I was over-exercising and under-fueling. I got to the point where I was running about 85-90 km a week."

"I've always been physically active and liked that side of it. It became a bit of an obsession. It was because I could escape mentally. I would throw my headphones on - I wouldn't take my phone with me - I would have my Apple watch with me and listen to music. And so, nobody could contact me. I really liked that because I felt like I was in control."

The collateral damage here was her dietary routine.

"I felt I was eating but I wasn't eating enough.I'd eat maybe a couple of meals a day if I was lucky but they weren't significant. It didn't start off as a deliberate thing. Essentially I felt good. I was light. I could run heaps. I wasn't getting injured like everyone was telling me I was going to do. It almost became a bit of, 'I am going to show you' sort of thing. And that even reinforced it."

"I got down to 57kg from 64kg. It wasn't ridiculous but it was significant. The ratios were out of whack. But there were other things I did not realise. It impacted my ability to concentrate. I didn't really want to see other people. I disengaged a lot from friends and family. There would be very few people who I would want to engage with. I would get really snappy, real moody if anyone asked anything. I became a bit of a different person. (I was) pretty hard to be around. I was not in a place to be able to go on tour and play cricket and give the commitment levels required for that.'

> I never opened up to people, I was a bit of a closed book, always very level. Didn't go too high or too low. I made it look like everything was fine even when it wasn't

Lanning did eventually seek professional help. She admits that she had never been comfortable with the idea of approaching a psychologist given how closed off she was anyway. After orchestrating her nation's biggest highs in her own way, she pined for control in her own life, something this obsession with running and exercise helped her gain. She would even keep food as a reward, a motivator to finish a run.

"I felt out of control in terms of what my future looked like. If it's not cricket, what does life look like if I am not playing? How could I not want to travel the world and play cricket? That doesn't make any sense. So (my obsession) was that bit of control."

Her struggle was never officially labelled an eating disorder, she said in the podcast. However, there were other issues to deal with like insomnia and the frustrations it brought along.

"I got to the point where I dreaded night-time because I knew I would go to bed and not be able to sleep. I would just get more angry with myself because I couldn't sleep. And you can't do anything. At least during the day when I get a bit anxious, I can go for a run. Your head then just goes round and round and it's not a great place to be but I just kept operating."

There is something heartbreaking about the world's most decorated World Cup captain (five World titles across the two white-ball formats) saying she realised that she isn't cut out for the international touring schedule anymore. But that was the price she paid for a decade of mind-numbing excellence.

Lanning admitted that when started out as a young captain in a ruthless Aussie setup which valued results, empathy was not an asset she possessed. It's one she had to learn. This experience only reinforced the value of that quality. It's why she decided to open up about her struggles and on her own terms.

"I have always wanted to keep things private because it's not really anyone else's business. But I've realised that everyone is going through something no matter how much things aren't under control. That's something I think I was very good at, looking like I had things under control. That was absolutely not the case. Regardless of who you are, there's something happening. Whether it's big or small, important or not important compared to everyone else, opening up helps others open up a bit too."

It's a new world for Lanning, one with unending possibilities before her - a scary prospect but an exciting one too. She revealed she still has to fight with her head sometimes, but she's come a long way in prioritising her well being. While ambitions to open a coffee shop and staying connected with sport in some way are on her vision board, she's just happy that she "can say yes to things now" that she couldn't do before.

She remembered a quote she saw in the MCG gym all those years ago - 'Ships are safe in the harbour but that's not what ships are built for.'

"I realise that more people, especially younger people, do things that are safe because we don't want to be bad at something or fail. So we don't try new things or a new skill. Failing or not being able to achieve something is actually a good thing because that's how you discover what you can do and what you're capable of and you might actually surprise yourself. Don't play it safe, go out there and give it a crack."

THE GIST

- Lanning, who won the T20 World Cup five times and the 50-overs edition twice, pulled out of the Women's Ashes last year for medical reasons and quit the national team in November
- The 32-year-old told the Howie Games podcast that she was grappling with an identity crisis away from the sport and that her diet and training regime had become unbalanced
- Lanning has continued to play domestic T20 cricket, featuring in the Women's Premier League in India, The Hundred in England and the Women's Big Bash League in Australia, but has firmly ruled out a return to the national side
- She quit the game as Australia's highest runscorer in women's internationals
- She oversaw an imperious period of dominance when Autralia won 24 ODIs on the trot under her leadership between 2018 and 2021

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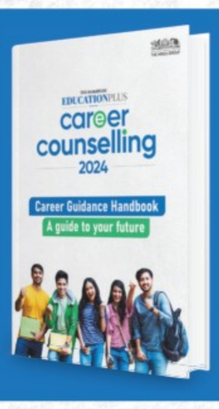

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INBRIEF

BIS Standards Clubs mentors training programme held

Bengaluru Branch of Bureau of Indian Standards, the National Standards body of India (under the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, Government of India), organised a residential mentors training programme for the teacher mentors of BIS Standards Clubs in the city on Friday. According to a release, 65 mentors of Standards Club of schools and colleges from various districts of Karnataka attended the programme. The objective was to train teacher mentors in various BIS-related activities to be conducted in their institutions, such as standards writing, slogan, drawing, quiz competitions, and so on. U.S.P. Yadav, Scientist-G and Deputy Director General (South), BIS, motivated the participants to be interactive and grab as much information they can from the experienced faculty. In his appeal to the public, he emphasised on purchase of only BIS certified products as the cost of substandard products may incur losses than savings for the consumer.

From Page One

Double murder in J.P. Nagar park

Suresh was married, and a few days ago, Anusha broke up with him. He attempted to patch up, but Anusha refused. On Thursday, Suresh called Anusha for a talk. Anusha's mother was around as she had accompanied her. While the duo were talking, Suresh allegedly pulled out a knife and stabbed Anusha to death. Noticing this, Anusha's mother rushed to her daughter's help and attacked Suresh with a brick she found at the park. Due to the blow, Suresh collapsed and died of excessive bleeding.

The police shifted the victims to a nearby hospital before taking the woman into custody for questioning. The incident left residents and visitors to the park in shock. The police suspect that the soured relationship was the motive behind the murder and are further investigating.

E-paper edition

The Hindu offers more coverage of Bengaluru in the e-paper edition. (epaper.thehindu.com)

In the issue dated April 19, we have a story based on a talk by Meera Iyer, convener of the Bengaluru chapter of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage, in which she explains how the Hoysala temples at Belur, Halebid, and Somanathapur got recognition from the UNESCO.

Text & Context and Science

Weekday features on *The Hindu* epaper (epaper.thehindu.com) carries explainers, special articles and quizzes. In the latest issue (April 19, Friday), the following articles are available:

- Why have private investments dropped? **bit.ly/privatefalls**
- The dynamic duo: enhanced liver function and gut health **bit.ly/liverandgut**

You can use your smartphone's inbuilt features to access these articles. If it's an Android phone, use Google Lens to read and tap the url to access an article. If it's an iPhone, use Live Text on camera to do the same.

RGUHS to introduce QR code-based admission tickets

The OTP link in the QR code will be accessible only to observer/squad appointed for theory exams

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

To avoid impersonation during medical courses exams, the Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences (RGUHS) has decided to introduce QR code-based admission tickets for exams scheduled from April 2024.

Speaking at a press conference here on Thursday, M.K. Ramesh, Vice-Chancellor of RGUHS, said: "This reform is part of ongoing efforts to streamline the medical courses examination system and enhance the security and verification procedures. This system will be applicable not only for the medical courses, but the examinations conducted by the university for all other affiliated courses."

Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences in Bengaluru. FILE PHOTO

"Each admission ticket will be equipped with a unique QR code containing the details of the candidates as available in the university database. The OTP-based link in the QR code will be accessible only to the observer/squad appointed for the theory exams," he explained.

Riyaz Basha S., Registrar (Evaluation), said the new system aims at reducing the risk of impersonation activities and ensure a more efficient and secure examination process. "Once the students are seated inside the examination hall, the observers can randomly scan the QR code for all students. As soon as the scanning begins, they will get an OPT and upon entering the OTP, they will get details of the student along with their photograph during admission," he said.

"We have also adopted AI-based face identification technology in the medical courses examination. This system will be implemented in the examinations scheduled in June 2024," he added.

With Vision-2023, RGUHS hopes to emerge as a global university in terms of administration, research activities, collaboration, bringing student friendly measures, complete digitisation, implementation modern technology in the medical fields, paperless environment, and accountability with staff. To reach this goal, the varsity organised a workshop for its staff in Bengaluru on Thursday.

Two arrested for killing younger brother over property dispute

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The railway police on Thursday said they had cracked the murder case of a 24-year-old man and arrested his two brothers for allegedly killing him over a property dispute and dumping his body on the railway track to make it look like suicide in Gadag district on April 8.

According to the police, the deceased Upendra Mali had a dispute over ancestral property with his elder brothers Thirupathi Mali, 25, and Ramanna Mali, 30. The deceased had taken ₹2 lakh from his brother to bequeath his share of property and did not return the land or money. The deceased was also allegedly sexually harassing his sister-in-law, which enraged the brothers to plan and kill him.

As per the plan, the duo invited him to drink and took him to the railway track. After a couple of drinks, they bludgeoned him to death with a stone. They later dumped the body on the railway track and returned home, said the police.

The next day, the Gadag police recovered the mutilated body of Upendra and registered a case of unnatural death. During the course of investigation, it was revealed that the death was due to bludgeoning and they stepped up the probe. In the course of inquiry, the police found out that Upendra had differences with his brothers over property and brought the duo for questioning.

Detailed questioning led them to confess to the murder, said S.K. Soumyalatha, Superintendent of Police, Railways.

FIR registered against Karnataka State Bar Council chairman, vice-chairman

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

They have been accused of alleged misappropriation of official funds worth several lakhs of rupees

The Vidhana Soudha police have registered an FIR against the chairman, vice-chairman, and others of the Karnataka State Bar Council (KSBC) for alleged misappropriation of official funds worth several lakhs of rupees.

The FIR was registered on April 17 based on a complaint filed by Basavaraj S., member of KSBC and a senior advocate.

KSBC's chairman Vishalaraghu H.L., vice-chairman Vinay B. Mangalekar, manager Puttegowda, and others have been named as accused, and IPC provisions for misappropriation, criminal breach of trust, cheating, forgery, falsification of accounts, and criminal conspiracy have been invoked against them.

According to the complaint, the KSBC had organised a State advocates' convention in August last year at Mysuru and ₹3.3 crore was collected for the convention from different sources, including ₹1.16 crore collected as donations from advocates and others, ₹1 crore as contribution from the State government, and ₹75 lakh from KSBC's own funds.

Documents forged

The accused showed that ₹3.12 crore was spent on the convention, by using forged documents and falsified accounts, and misappropriated the fund collected for their personal use, it was alleged in the complaint.

It was stated that the first information to the police was given after KSBC failed to act on the complaint given to it by the complainant. The police have sought more details.

Students complain of out-of-syllabus questions in CET Biology, Maths papers

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

On the first day of the Common Entrance Test (CET) on Thursday, students complained that 11 questions in the Biology question paper were from deleted chapters of the NCERT Biology textbook of PU, and nine questions were asked out of syllabus in Mathematics.

"This year, the Biology question paper was moderate, but around 11 questions were asked from deleted chapters. A total of six chapters in Biology were left out while being taught and teachers had said that no question will come from them in entrance exams. However, I was surprised to see the questions asked from those lessons. I could not answer them. It is not known whether the Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA) will give grace marks or not," said Monika C.G., a student.

Students at the CET exam centre at Seshadripuram in Bengaluru on Thursday. SUDHAKARA JAIN

There were also accusations of nine questions in Maths being out of syllabus. "Compared to the previous year, this time, the maths question paper was tough. They asked many questions that were out of syllabus," said Vishal, a student.

"National Testing Agency has rationalised Biology and Chemistry subjects for NEET examination and nine chapters from Chemistry and six chapters from Biology subjects were deleted from the syllabus. So, we taught the same syllabus for II PU examination, CET, and NEET. However, these deleted chapters were the part of CET-2024 syllabus and most of the teachers and colleges were unaware of this," said a Biology teacher from a Government PU College.

"Questions were asked from the deleted chapters of II PU Biology textbooks like Reproduction in Organisms, Strategies for Enhancement in Food Production, Organisms and Populations, Echo system, Environmental Issues from and Plant Kingdom, Structural Organisation in Animals from I PU textbooks," he added.

Clarifying about the complaints, S. Ramya, Executive Director of KEA, said: "There is an option to raise objections against such questions. Later, the experts committee will examine them and KEA will take the decision based on the committee's advice." "The question papers are set as per the prescribed norms. There is no need for anxiety. The link to submit objections will be enabled on Saturday," she said.

Other than this, the test went off smoothly at 737 centres across the State. As many as 3,49,637 candidates had downloaded admission cards for CET, which is the gateway for professional courses, including engineering. As per preliminary information, out of 3,49,673 applicants, 80% attended the examination.

Festivity

Vehicle movement on Mysuru Road was restricted in view of the large gathering attending the festival at Gali Anjaneya Swamy temple in Bengaluru on Thursday. K. MURALI KUMAR

Man held for stealing from train passengers

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Mysuru railway police on Thursday arrested a 34-year-old cook from Mysuru and recovered laptops and mobile phones worth ₹10.2 lakh from him.

Based on a complaint of a laptop bag belonging to a techie being stolen from the moving train, the railway police stepped up vigil and zeroed in on Sudhindra while he was moving around suspiciously with a laptop bag.

Detailed questioning led him to confess to the crime.

The accused told the police that he lost his job and had financial troubles. He started stealing valuables from passengers and sold it at throwaway prices.

Paediatrician, staff nurse found dead in separate incidents

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The deceased have been identified as Channabasu Ashok Yalameli and Ananthaprasad

A 22-year-old staff nurse of a private hospital allegedly ended his life by jumping in front of a moving train in Deepanjalinagar on Thursday morning.

The deceased has been identified as Channabasu Ashok Yalameli, a native of Vijayapura working as a staff nurse at the private hospital in the city. He was staying at his aunt's house, the police said.

Passers-by noticed the body on the railway track and informed the police. The police shifted the body for post-mortem and have taken up a case of unnatural death for further investigation.

In another incident, Ananthaprasad, 38, a paediatrician working in a city hospital and who got married three months ago, allegedly committed suicide on the railway track near Yelahanka railway station. The police are investigating.

(Those in distress or having suicidal tendencies can call Arogya sahayavani ph. 104 for help)

The dynamic duo: enhanced liver function and gut health

On World Liver Day, let's look at what needs to be done to support the liver and the gut to execute their functions. They have a symbiotic relationship. Nurturing one benefits the other. Introducing fiber-rich foods and avoiding processed and sugar-rich foods help the liver

Mohamed Rela

In the intricate ecosystem of our bodies, two unsung heroes often overlooked are the liver and the gut. While the liver diligently detoxifies, metabolises, and stores nutrients, the gut orchestrates digestion and plays a pivotal role in our immune system. However, the connection between these two vital organs goes deeper than meets the eye. In this article, we delve into the symbiotic relationship between liver function and gut health, shedding light on how nurturing one benefits the other.

A sand sculpture to promote a 'Healthy Liver for Healthy Life' created by artist Sudarshan Pattnaik at Marina beach in Chennai. THE HINDU

Understanding liver function

The liver, often hailed as the body's powerhouse, boasts a repertoire of functions crucial for our overall well-being. Primarily, it detoxifies harmful substances, be it environmental toxins or metabolic byproducts, ensuring our bloodstream remains clean. Additionally, the liver synthesises essential proteins, stores glycogen for energy, and metabolises fats, carbohydrates, and proteins, thereby regulating blood sugar levels and cholesterol. However, this multitasking marvel isn't invincible. Factors such as excessive alcohol consumption, poor dietary choices, viral infections, and certain medications can burden the liver, impairing its function. Over time, this strain may lead to liver diseases such as fatty liver disease, hepatitis, or even liver cirrhosis.

The Gut: gateway to health

Traversing down the digestive tract, we encounter another protagonist: the gut. More than a mere passageway for food, the gut hosts trillions of microorganisms collectively known as the gut microbiota. This bustling community aids in breaking down food, synthesising vitamins, and, crucially, bolstering our immune system. Maintaining a diverse and balanced gut microbiome is pivotal for overall health. However, modern lifestyles, marked by processed foods, antibiotics, and chronic stress, often disrupt this delicate equilibrium, paving the way for gastrointestinal disorders like irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), inflammatory bowel disease (IBD), and leaky gut syndrome.

The Interplay: liver-gut axis

Now, let's unravel the intricate interplay between the liver and the gut, often referred to as the liver-gut axis. This bidirectional communication system involves various molecules, hormones, and immune cells shuttling between the two organs, influencing each other's function. One crucial link is the bile produced by the liver, which aids in fat digestion. Interestingly, bile acids also act as signaling molecules in the gut, modulating the composition of the gut microbiota. Conversely, metabolites produced by gut bacteria can influence liver metabolism and inflammation. Moreover, a healthy gut microbiome contributes to the integrity of the gut barrier, preventing harmful substances from leaking into the bloodstream and burdening the liver. Conversely, a compromised gut barrier, as seen in conditions like leaky gut syndrome, can trigger systemic inflammation and liver dysfunction.

Given their intertwined relationship, fostering gut health emerges as a promising avenue to bolster liver function. Here are some strategies to optimise both: Embrace a fiber-rich diet – fiber-rich foods like fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and legumes serve as prebiotics, nourishing beneficial gut bacteria. Moreover, soluble fiber binds to bile acids, aiding in their excretion and reducing cholesterol levels, thus alleviating the liver's workload. Incorporating probiotic-rich foods like yogurt, kefir, and kimchi introduces beneficial bacteria into the gut, fostering a diverse microbiome. These microbes can metabolise bile acids and modulate inflammation, indirectly benefiting liver health.

> A healthy gut microbiome contributes to the integrity of the gut barrier, preventing harmful substances from leaking into the bloodstream and burdening the liver

Limit sugar and processed foods: Excessive sugar and processed foods not only disrupt the gut microbiota but also contribute to fatty liver disease and insulin resistance. Opting for whole, unprocessed foods help maintain gut integrity and liver health. Stay hydrated: Adequate hydration supports liver function by aiding in the elimination of toxins through urine and optimising bile production for digestion.

Manage stress: Chronic stress can wreak havoc on gut health by altering gut permeability and microbiota composition. Prioritising stress management techniques like meditation, yoga, or deep breathing exercises can mitigate its adverse effects.

In the intricate tapestry of human physiology, the liver and gut stand as pillars of health, closely intertwined in their functions. By nurturing gut health through mindful dietary choices, stress management, and probiotic support, we can bolster liver function and pave the way for vibrant well-being. Let's embark on this journey towards enhanced liver function and gut health, celebrating the dynamic duo that fuels our vitality.

(Prof. Mohamed Rela is Chairman, Dr. Rela Institute & Medical Centre, Chennai.)

Randomised control trials: the technique that transformed TB care

C. Aravinda

Kamala Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru's wife, fell victim to tuberculosis (TB), in a far-off Swiss sanatorium in 1936.

Kamala's privileged social background could not save her. A stark reminder of the disease's indiscriminate nature.

At the time, Nehru was confined to a colonial prison, a helpless, distant spectator to his wife's battle with TB. His shackles prevented him from being by her side. In a cruel twist of fate, the man who would become his greatest adversary in the political arena, M.A. Jinnah, too, ultimately met his end against the same relentless enemy that claimed Nehru's beloved, we later learnt.

The untimely demise of these privileged individuals, along with millions around the globe, is a chilling testament to the lack of effective therapeutics against the dreaded disease, despite its causative agent being uncovered in 1882. Today, almost a century later, the narrative of TB treatment has dramatically transformed. We aspire to eliminate tuberculosis from the world by the end of this decade. This year (2024), the theme of World TB Day was "Yes, we can end TB." This was unimaginable for centuries. It is now possible because of the therapeutic regimen. A testament to medical advancements and a tribute to the tireless efforts of the medical community.

Tuberculosis patients in their wards at the LGB TB hospital in Guwahati. AP

Revolution in treatment

TB is an unyielding nemesis caused by Mycobacterium tuberculosis, which has existed for at least 3 million years. It has been a thorn in the side of humanity since the beginning of civilisation. Before antibiotics, TB treatments were largely palliative, offering fresh air and rest to patients in sanatoriums at high altitudes or tranquil countryside locations. Alternatively, surgical procedures like lobectomy, artificial pneumothorax (collapsing the lung), and pneumonectomy were performed by expert cardiothoracic surgeons. These treatment options, however, had limited success, and their efficacy was often questionable.

The discovery of antibiotics by Sir Alexander Fleming marked the beginning of a new chapter in the fight against this persistent foe. However, the real revolution in TB treatment was brought on by the ground-breaking work of Sir Austin Bradford Hill. Hill's own bout with TB during World War I may have thwarted his aspirations to become a physician, but it didn't dampen his spirit. Hill made remarkable contributions to medical statistics. He pioneered the randomised control trial technique at the British Medical Research Council (BMRC). It led to one of the first randomised clinical trials to evaluate the efficacy of antibiotics against TB. He is also credited with the establishment of early ethical guidelines for clinical trials that set a new standard for scientific integrity in medicine.

Critical role in research

Clinical trials performed using the randomisation technique have been instrumental in shaping modern medicine, providing a robust and unbiased method to evaluate the efficacy of various treatments and interventions. They have been the cornerstone of numerous medical breakthroughs, including the discovery of aspirin's role in preventing heart attacks, the development of antiretroviral therapy for HIV treatment, and the application of cognitive behavioural therapy for mental health conditions to the latest COVID vaccines.

Hill's effective implementation of RCTs in testing streptomycin, the first antibiotic to prove effective against TB, was a game-changer. His meticulous work helped establish the optimal dosage of this life-saving drug, transitioning it from a lab discovery to a practical solution for TB. Hill's efforts redefined the management of TB, moving it from the exclusive domain of specialised surgeons to the broader realm of primary care physicians.

Hill's contributions, however, went beyond TB. His eponymous 'Bradford Hill Criteria' form the bedrock of modern epidemiology. The nine criteria – strength, consistency, specificity, temporality, biological gradient, plausibility, coherence, experiment, and analogy – provide a robust framework for establishing a causal link between a specific factor and a health effect. From establishing alcohol as a risk factor for cardiovascular diseases to the risks of sugar-sweetened beverages and obesity, the criteria served as a guiding principle for examining evidence in several areas.

Hill's criteria were pivotal in establishing the link between smoking and lung cancer through a case-control study. His research provided irrefutable evidence, debunking the pseudoscience propagated by the tobacco lobby and causing a significant shift in public perception and policy towards tobacco.

Debt of gratitude

As we stand on the threshold of eliminating TB, even in the face of formidable challenges such as Multi-Drug Tuberculosis (MDR-TB) and Extensively Drug-Resistant Tuberculosis (XDR-TB), we owe a monumental debt of gratitude to Sir Austin Bradford Hill. His life and work serve as a testament to the power of scientific inquiry and resilience, continuing to inspire us as we aspire to achieve the ambitious goal of eradicating TB.

Today, as we reflect on the past, let's honour the invaluable contributions of scientists like Sir Bradford Hill. In their tireless research and relentless pursuit of knowledge, they have carved pathways to incredible change. His work is a testament to the power of science to effect positive change, a legacy that continues to inspire researchers around the world.

(Dr. C. Aravinda is an academic and public health physician. aravindaaiimsjr10@hotmail.com)

Students take part in the Millet Walkathon Rally to promote healthy eating habits in Tiruchi. M. MOORTHY

Cardiologist busts notions of 'good' and 'bad' habits

Anbarasu Mohanraj

Since a number of our patients are now youngsters, the process of counselling them has become an interesting experience. Invariably they ask: "Why did I end up getting this disease?" We explain the possible medical causes – diabetes, hypertension, sedentary lifestyle, genetic aspects, family history, and stress. Sometimes, their response to that is: "But, doctor, I do not have any bad habits."

Clearly, there is a gross misconception regarding "bad habits. What are these "bad habits" in the Indian context? Primarily, as far as it "affects cardiology, they think drinking and smoking are bad habits. No doubt, to some extent, they are correct. And the latest trend is the response, "Doctor, I don't even eat non-vegetarian food." For cardiologists, this perception of bad habits is quite worrisome.

Habit formation is rooted in ancient evolutionary mechanisms in the brain. Obviously, it is modified by society and influenced by the choices of our family members, peers, and friends. We have noted, anecdotally, that those who say "I have no bad habits" the loudest generally have a BMI of over 30, even 35, which makes them obese. When we analyse their daily activities, we find one common attribute: they hardly move around except for the most essential chores and, have no concept of what they eat.

> **The levels of obesity are astonishing. Some people are morbidly obese: the waist is 120 cm. They have thin extremities, like thin arms and legs, but a fat-laden chest and belly.**

It is increasingly astonishing to see the levels of obesity, particularly abdominal obesity, in youngsters. Some are morbidly obese: the waist circumference is 120 cm, as opposed to the recommended waist circumference of 90 cm. They also have thin extremities, like thin arms and legs, but a fat-laden chest and belly. This is a very unhealthy body shape. Their body fat is probably in the range of 35-45%, as opposed to 15%, which is ideal.

When we ask our patients, "Do you go for walks?" The immediate response is quite predictable. "I don't have time to walk, I walk during work." A study by the Indian Physician Association states that an average office employee in India does not take more than 2,500 steps a day. This is quite worrisome. "Everyone has a mobile and can download fitness apps. Remember that it is important to take at least 6,000 steps a day, though 10,000 would be ideal, to say you live a healthy life."

The Indian diet is traditionally carbohydrate-rich. The addition of fast food to our culture in the last two decades has only made it worse. A radical re-look at our food culture is needed. The protein component has to be raised. A typical diet of curd rice with pickles is considered simple and healthy, but there is minimal protein in the curd, and it is carb-rich. It is also important to bust the myth that non-vegetarian food is bad for health. A limited amount of non-vegetarian dishes is the best way to fulfil the protein requirement. If one is a vegetarian, you need to actively look for alternate sources of protein.

(The author is Director, Dept. of Cardio-Vascular and Thoracic Surgery, Medway Heart Institute, Chennai. anbarasu.mohanraj@gmail.com)

For feedback and suggestions
for 'Science', please write to **science@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Daily page'

IISc launches 'Longevity India' initiative to focus on research on ageing

It has also started a large-scale clinical study that will involve researchers from IISc departments, clinicians, philanthropists, and civil society

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Indian Institute of Science (IISc) has launched the 'Longevity India' Initiative, a project focused on efforts to extend human healthspan and tackle ageing-related challenges.

The initiative has also started a large-scale clinical study that will involve researchers from multiple IISc departments, clinicians, industry, philanthropists, and civil society.

"This initiative seeks to enhance the understanding of through both fundamental and applied research, and to develop solutions that can improve quality of life. The initiative has received initial grant funding support from Prashanth Prakash, Founding Partner, Accel India," said IISc in a statement.

It added that the Longevity India Initiative brings together a multidisciplinary team of experts from academia, industry, and healthcare to address complex challenges related to ageing. The initiative will leverage advanced research to develop interventions that can help manage age-related diseases more effectively, with an emphasis on promoting healthy ageing across India.

MS Ramaiah Hospital and Bangalore Medical College & Research Institute have partnered to conduct a clinical study for identifying biomarkers of ageing. Additionally, leading industry partners like Beckman Coulter, Healthians, Valerian Proteomics, and DecodeAge are providing crucial support by offering their technologies at accessible costs, accelerating research efforts.

Traffic police launch drive against abandoned vehicles

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The traffic police launched a special drive against abandoned vehicles across the city and identified over 1,400 such vehicles parked haphazardly in public places, disrupting free flow of traffic.

While many owners have been issued notices and slapped fines, as many as 900 vehicles have been removed, including 521 two-wheelers, 706 autorickshaws, 79 cars, six heavy vehicles, and 93 light motor vehicles. The details of 494 abandoned vehicles are yet to be ascertained.

M.N. Anucheth, Joint Commissioner of Police (Traffic), said the drive to identify and remove abandoned vehicles from public places will be continued in order to clear roads from obstruction.

Air India Express offers discount to first-time voters flying home

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Air India Express has unveiled #VoteAsYouAre initiative, to encourage first time voters to exercise their voting rights in the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections.

The airline is offering 19% off across its domestic and international network for first-time voters, between the ages of 18 and 22, flying home to cast their votes.

Bookings can be made on the airline's mobile app and website, airindiaexpress.com for travel to the airport nearest to the respective constituency of the voter, between April 18 and June 1 2024.

Ankur Garg, Chief Commercial Officer, Air India Express said, "As we gear up for our 19th anniversary, #VoteAsYouAre symbolises our commitment to empowering and galvanising the youth in shaping the future of our nation. With this initiative, we want to make it easier for first-time voters to exercise their right to vote while also expressing our gratitude for their engagement in shaping the future of our country."

The airline added that first time voters can avail this offer across the fare family of Air India Express that include four fare products – Xpress Lite (cabin baggage only fares), Xpress Value (15 kg check-in bag fares), Xpress Flex (unlimited changes with no change fees) and Xpress Biz (Business Class seating with complimentary Gourmair meals & priority services).

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Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Number of employees fired by Google after office sit-in protest

28 Google fired employees involved in protests over the company's cloud computing contract with the Israeli government. The workers held sit-ins at the company's offices in California and New York. AP

The shares subscribed in Vodafone-Idea's FPO on the first day

26 In percentage. Debt-saddled telecom operator Vodafone Idea Ltd's ₹18,000 crore follow-on offering (FPO) opened to a modest response. Of the 1,260 crore shares on offer, 331.24 crore was subscribed. PTI

Loss of GST revenues due to offshore illegal betting firms

2.5 in $ billion. The gaming industry body AIGF estimates that offshore illegal betting and gambling entities are causing the national exchequer a loss of $2.5 billion per annum. PTI

The extent of the loss of GDP due to global warming

10 In percentage. Warming of the planet by 3 degrees Celsius may cost up to 10% of GDP, according to the *Nature Climate Change* journal. It also found that poorer, tropical countries could see the worst effects. PTI

Nestle India shares fall over reports of more sugar in milk products

3 in percentage. Shares of Nestle India declined amid reports that the global FMCG major sold infant products with more sugar content in South Asian countries including India. PTI

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Why have private investments dropped?

What is private Gross Fixed Capital Formation? When did private investments pick up in India? Will strong consumption spending increase private sector confidence? How do government policies affect private capital formation?

EXPLAINER

Prashanth Perumal

The story so far:

The failure of private investment, as measured by private Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF) as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) at current prices, to pick up pace has been one of the major issues plaguing the Indian economy. Private investment witnessed a steady decline since 2011-12 and the government has been hoping that large Indian corporations would step in and ramp up investment. In fact, in 2019, the Centre slashed corporate taxes from 30% to 22% hoping that the move would encourage private investment.

What is GFCF and why does it matter?

GFCF refers to the growth in the size of fixed capital in an economy. Fixed capital refers to things such as buildings and machinery, for instance, which require investment to be created. So private GFCF can serve as a rough indicator of how much the private sector in an economy is willing to invest. Overall GFCF also includes capital formation as a result of investment by the government.

GFCF matters because fixed capital, by helping workers produce a greater amount of goods and services each year, helps to boost economic growth and improve living standards. In other words, fixed capital is what largely determines the overall output of an economy and hence what consumers can actually purchase in the market. Developed economies such as the U.S. possess more fixed capital per capita than developing economies such as India.

What is the trend seen in private investment in India?

In India, private investment began to pick up significantly mostly after the economic reforms of the late-1980s and the early-1990s that improved private sector confidence. From independence to economic liberalisation, private investment largely remained either slightly below or above 10% of the GDP. Public investment as a percentage of GDP, on the other hand, steadily rose over the decades from less than 3% of GDP in 1950-51 to overtake private investment as a percentage of GDP in the early 1980s. It, however, began to drop post-liberalisation with private investment taking on the leading role in fixed capital formation.

GETTY IMAGES

The growth in private investment lasted until the global financial crisis of 2007-08. It rose from around 10% of GDP in the 1980s to around 27% in 2007-08. From 2011-12 onwards, however, private investment began to drop and hit a low of 19.6% of the GDP in 2020-21.

Why has private investment fallen?

Many economists in India have blamed low private consumption expenditure as the primary reason behind the failure of private investment to pick up over the last decade, and particularly since the onset of the pandemic. Their reasoning is that strong consumption spending is required to give businesses the confidence that there will be sufficient demand for their output once they decide to invest in building fixed capital. Hence these economists have advised that the government should put more money into the hands of the people to boost consumption expenditure, and thus help kick start private investment.

Historically, however, an increase in private consumption has not led to a rise in private investment in India. In fact, a drop in consumption spending has boosted private investment rather than dampening it. Private final consumption expenditure dropped steadily from nearly 90% of GDP in 1950-51 to hit a low of 54.7% of GDP in 2010-11, which was a year prior to when private investment hit a peak and began its long decline. And since 2011-12, private consumption has risen while private investment has witnessed a worrying fall as a percentage of GDP. The inverse relationship between consumption and investment is likely because the money that is allocated towards savings and investment, either by the government or by private businesses, comes at the cost of lower consumption expenditure. Other economists believe that structural problems may likely be the core reason behind the significant fall in private investment as a percentage of GDP over the last decade or so. They have cited unfavourable government policy and policy uncertainty as major issues affecting private investment. The rise in private investment in the 1990s and the 2000s correlated with the economic reforms programme started in 1991. The drop in private investment, on the other hand, correlated with the slowdown in the pace of reforms in the last two decades under both the UPA (second term) and NDA governments. Further, policy uncertainty can discourage private investment as investors expect stability to carry out risky long-term projects.

What about low private investment?

The biggest cost of low private investment would be slower economic growth as a larger fixed capital base is crucial to boost economic output. The push by the government to increase government investment is also seen as a negative by some who believe that it crowds out private investment.

Others, however, think that government investment compensates for the lack of private investment. It should be noted, however, that private investors are considered to be better allocators of capital than public officials, helping avoid wasteful spending. Further, taxes imposed to raise money for public spending can be a significant drag on the economy.

THE GIST

- Gross Fixed Capital Formation refers to the growth in the size of fixed capital in an economy. Fixed capital refers to things such as buildings and machinery, for instance, which require investment to be created.
- The biggest cost of low private investment would be slower economic growth as a larger fixed capital base is crucial to boost economic output.
- Many economists in India have blamed low private consumption expenditure as the primary reason behind the failure of private investment to pick up over the last decade, and particularly since the onset of the pandemic.

What is the Bhojshala-Kamal Maula complex dispute?

What did the Madhya Pradesh High Court rule? Why is the status of the complex contested? What has the Supreme Court said about the issue?

Ziya Us Salam

The story so far:

On March 22, the 13th century Bhojshala-Kamal Maula complex in Madhya Pradesh's Dhar district became the latest site for a "scientific survey" by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). The action followed the Madhya Pradesh High Court ruling which had, on March 11, ordered the ASI to conduct a survey of the premises within six weeks. The complex is contested by Hindus and Muslims as the Vagdevi temple and Kamal Maula Masjid, respectively.

What has the Supreme Court said?

Even as a 15-member ASI team along with the district administration and local police began the survey of the entire complex, the Supreme Court issued a word of caution on April 1. A Bench presided over by Justice Hrishikesh Roy said no physical excavation that would alter the character of the premises should be carried out. The court's cautionary note followed the mosque's appeal against the High Court order. The top court also ordered that no further action should be taken on the outcome of the excavation without its permission.

What has been the status quo?

The Bhojshala-Kamal Maula temple-mosque compound has had a truce for the past 20 years. Following an arrangement in 2003, Hindus perform puja here on Tuesday while Muslims perform namaaz on Friday. Despite the occasional hiccup, the system worked fine until recently when a little-known outfit by the name of 'Hindu Front for Justice' petitioned the High Court, claiming the complex was a temple built in 1034 and the mosque here was constructed during the reign of Sultanate king, Alauddin Khalji in the 13th century by "destroying and dismantling ancient structures of previously constructed Hindu temples".

Dhar itself has been a city of prominence during the time of the Paramaras, the Marathas and the Delhi Sultanate.

The Muslims, however, claim no existing place of worship was demolished by Maula Kamaluddin Chishti, a sufi, after whom the mosque was named. He was a disciple of Nizamuddin Auliya and is said to have migrated to Dhar in 1291. He preached here for around 40 years. His tomb, built next to the mosque inside the complex here, is frequented by people of both faiths. They claim too that the ASI mentioned the Kamal Maula mosque in its records in 1902, and allege that the controversy began the same year when Kanshi Ram Lele, an education officer, found Sanskrit shlokas written on the floor of the mosque, and concluded it was the mythical Bhojshala.

Have there been surveys before?

A survey was carried out during the British regime by John Malcolm in 1822 who mentioned many legends about Raja Bhoja, including the dams he built, but did not mention any Bhojshala. Malcolm did refer to the current building as a mosque albeit in ruins. He mentioned too a pulpit approached by a flight of stairs. On its floor, Malcolm is said to have found a Hindu inscription, indicating the mosque was built with pre-used material. Whether the pre-used material was of a local place of worship or otherwise, he did not investigate.

In 1935, the Front claims permission was granted by the local king for namaaz for a day. After Independence, the Jan Sangh entered the fray and started a protest for the restoration of the alleged temple. Then, around the time the Babri Masjid-Ramjanambhoomi stir was at its peak, attempts were made to whip up Hindu sentiments and recite Hanuman Chalisa here. The attempts were foiled by the administration. In 1998 a petition was filed in the High Court in 1998 by Vimal Kumar Godha on behalf of the Bajrang Dal and other Hindu bodies. The Kamal Maula mosque continued to be contested by the Hindu outfits in the legal domain. In 2002, around the time of Gujarat pogrom, there was violence around the ownership of the place of worship here as well. The local administration stated the place was "Kamal Maula mosque" and the existence of Bhojshala was a "mystery". Next year, a truce was arrived at with specific days for worship for both communities. The same words were quoted by the High Court recently while ordering a survey of the place.

THE GIST

- On March 22, the 13th century Bhojshala-Kamal Maula complex in Madhya Pradesh's Dhar district became the latest site for a "scientific survey" by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).
- The 'Hindu Front for Justice' petitioned the High Court, claiming the complex was a temple built in 1034 and the mosque here was constructed during the reign of Alauddin Khalji in the 13th century by "destroying and dismantling ancient structures of previously constructed Hindu temples".
- The Muslims claim no existing place of worship was demolished by Maula Kamaluddin Chishti after whom the mosque was named.

‘BJP and PM indirectly hindering city’s prospects to woo investors to Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh’

The MP questions why Centre did not resolve drinking water woes by clearing Mekedatu project

INTERVIEW

D.K. Suresh

B.S. Satish Kumar
BENGALURU

Ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit to Bengaluru, Congress MP D.K. Suresh has fired a fresh salvo at the BJP Central leadership by accusing it of casting a shadow on the future of Bengaluru and Karnataka by “consciously” hindering their development in an attempt to woo investments to cities in Gujarat and U.P.

Mr. Suresh, the brother of Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar who is seeking re-election for the fourth consecutive time from Bengaluru Rural Lok Sabha constituency, alleges that the brand value of Bengaluru has been diminishing in the last 10 years of BJP rule at the Centre.

In an interview with *The Hindu*, Mr. Suresh, who had earlier remarked that there will be no other choice left but to ask for a separate south Indian country if the Centre continues to ignore this region in terms of devolution of taxes, questioned the contribution of the BJP government at the Centre, particularly Prime Minister Narendra Modi towards development of Bengaluru.

D.K. Suresh, Congress candidate from Bengaluru Rural constituency, at his residence in Bengaluru. K. MURALI KUMAR

What are the main issues this time?

I am seeking votes on the basis of my performance and guarantee schemes taken up by our government. I have committed myself to completing ongoing and planned irrigation and multi-village drinking water works to provide piped water supply to all. I have also assured people of 25 to 30 villages around Bengaluru of ensuring regular Cauvery water supply by this year end. Bengaluru city areas like Rajarajeshwarinagar are suffering from depletion of groundwater level. Hence, we want to take up a project to inter-link and also fill up 185 tanks in Bengaluru.

You began ‘My tax-My right’ campaign of Congress. Are you using this in your campaign?

When I referred to it, I was only trying to draw the attention to injustice done to Karnataka and other South Indian States. But the BJP projected it as though I am seeking division of the country. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is showing only lip sympathy towards development of Karnataka in the last 10 years.

For example, Kalasabanduri Nala drinking water project and Upper Bhadra Project have not gone forward. Though Bengaluru is facing severe water crisis, they are yet to clear Mekedatu balancing reservoir project. The BJP Central leadership and Prime Minister are indirectly hindering the future of Bengaluru and Karnataka. They want the cities in Gujarat and U.P. to develop at the cost of Bengaluru by obstructing its development so that they can woo investments from here. Already, they are forcing companies in Bengaluru to set up units in Gujarat.

Will BJP-JD(S) alliance impact you?

They have come together to safeguard their own families. On the part of BJP, it could also be an attempt to crush the regional party.

What is your say on C.N. Manjunath taking you on?

I just want to say that he has got everything because of his political background though he claims he does not indulge in politics.

BJP-JD(S) say any upsets for you will impact the future of your brother D.K. Shivakumar and trigger a political tussle in the government...

I am 100% confident of my victory. The BJP-JD(S) leaders have been saying that the Congress government will collapse to safeguard their own parties and prevent their leaders from deserting them. Our CM is focusing on development. In three years, the GDP of Karnataka will get a boost in rural areas.

Water crisis part of political rhetoric, but makes little impact this poll season

CITY AND ELECTIONS

K.V. Aditya Bharadwaj
BENGALURU

The city is going through one of its worst drinking water crisis in recent years, but the issue seems to have found little resonance in the campaigning for the Lok Sabha elections, though it is a small part of the rhetoric deployed by both the national parties.

“Both the BJP and the Congress candidates are being questioned on the gaps in infrastructure in our area, as each of these parties are in power in Delhi and Karnataka, respectively. The water crisis and the 2022 floods are part of this larger narrative. However, these are local issues that rarely resonate in a national election,” said Jagadish Reddy, a resident of Varthur - one of the worst hit by the water crisis this summer.

However, water is part of the larger narrative the BJP and the Congress are deploying for the city. For instance, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman recently attacked the Sate government over the water crisis and a few cases of cholera being reported in the city and said this was a result of the State government stopping works on Central projects related to water. R. Ashok, Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly, has attacked the State government for mismanagement of the water crisis and “surrender to the tanker mafia” and said this had hit “Brand Bengaluru”.

Drinking water cans for participants at a rally of BJP candidate Tejasvi Surya at Jayanagar in Bengaluru. FILE PHOTO

Lok Sabha elections 2024

Senior Congress leader Ramalinga Reddy hit back at the BJP saying if there was a balancing reservoir built at Mekedatu, the city wouldn’t have faced such a crisis and the Union government had been withholding permission for the same. The BJP has tried to capitalise on the Congress-led INDIA party DMK’s manifesto in Tamil Nadu opposing the Mekedatu project.

However, a cross section of politicians across party lines said there were no probing questions by the electorate on the ground over the water crisis when they went campaigning. “One, the crisis is not as big as it is made out to be and two, the government has diffused what could potentially have been a big issue in the city by ensuring drinking water supply and depoliticising the issue,” a senior BJP leader said.

While Deputy Chief Minister and Bengaluru Development Minister D.K. Shivakumar has been the face of all government initiatives in the city since the Congress government came to power in May 2023, the water crisis is front-ended by Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) chairman V. Ram Prasath Manohar. This was a conscious decision to depoliticise the issue, sources in the Congress said.

Pressing issues depoliticised

Water conservation activist S. Vishwanath said water, flooding, and other pressing issues of the city rarely become an issue of political contest as there was no differentiator between the parties in the solution sets they offer. “Managing these problems have more or less been depoliticised and bureaucratised,” he said, adding people were confused as to who to hold responsible in three layer structure of governance for the ills plaguing the city.

For instance, the BJP internal surveys indicated a big anti-incumbency against then Mahadevapura MLA Arvind Limbavali after the 2022 floods, forcing the party to change the candidate in 2023. It eventually fielded his wife Manjula Limbavali who faced no anti-incumbency and won comfortably. Another constituency that suffered the most due to floods K.R. Puram also re-elected its MLA, who also happened to be Urban Development Minister under the BJP regime.

Man drowns in sea at Malpe

The Hindu Bureau
MANGALURU

A 26-year-old resident of Hassan district drowned in the sea, off Malpe beach, in Udupi district, on Thursday. The Malpe police gave name of the deceased as Girish, a resident of Dabebeluru in Hassan district.

The police said Girish was among 20 residents of Dabebeluru who went on a trip. After visiting Sringeri and Agumbe, the group came to Malpe Beach. Girish and his two friends Santosh, 24, and Harish, 30, entered the sea for a swim. All three were caught in the undercurrent. Girish died before reaching the hospital, the police said.

Timings
BENGALURU

FRIDAY, APR. 19		
RISE	06:05	SET 18:33
RISE	15:08	SET 03:10
SATURDAY, APR. 20		
RISE	06:04	SET 18:33
RISE	15:53	SET 03:45
SUNDAY, APR. 21		
RISE	06:04	SET 18:33
RISE	16:37	SET 04:18

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	35	26
Mysuru	36	23
Bengaluru	35	22

Bengaluru Today
36°C A dry weather will prevail. Morning will be pleasant.The day will be very warm with uneasy afternoon. Night will be pleasant.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
36°C Rise in temperature. The weather will be dry. Day will be very warm with uneasy afternoon. Night will comfortable

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THE HINDU
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‘Five out of six candidates from Bengaluru have criminal cases against them’

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The two women candidates contesting the Lok Sabha elections from three constituencies in Bengaluru this time - Sowmya Reddy from Congress (six cases) and Shobha Karandlaje from BJP (five cases) - have the most number of criminal cases registered against them, according to a report released by Bangalore Political Action Committee (BPAC) in association with DAKSH.

Self-sworn affidavits

The report is based on the self-sworn affidavits of the six candidates from national parties - the BJP and the Congress contesting from Bengaluru. It shows that five out of the six candidates, with the exclusion of M.V. Rajeev Gowda, contesting from Bengaluru North, have criminal cases filed against them. Some of these cases are in the investigation stage, while some are pending before the courts.

Tejasvi Surya (Bengaluru South, BJP) has three cases registered against him, while P.C. Mohan (Bengaluru Central, BJP), and Mansoor Ali Khan (Bengaluru Central, Congress) have two and one cases registered against them, respectively.

Among the many cases against Ms. Reddy, the charges range from unlawful assembly and public nuisance to intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of the peace and assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty. Ms. Karandlaje’s charges include defamation, inflammatory speech and scandalous allegations against a State, and offence of money laundering.

Incumbent MP of Bengaluru South constituency, Mr. Surya faces charges of promoting enmity between different groups on ground of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc, deliberate and malicious acts and rioting among others. Both the candidates from Bengaluru Central have been charged with unlawful assembly, disobedience and public nuisance.

“A detailed analysis was conducted to understand the nature of cases and the number of cases against each candidate. This was done to help the public understand the nature and severity of the cases that have been declared in the affidavits to make an informed choice,” said a press release from BPAC.

Number of criminal cases

Bengaluru North	
Shobha Karandlaje, BJP: 5	M.V. Rajeev Gowda, Congress: 0
Bengaluru Central	
P.C. Mohan, BJP: 2	Mansoor Ali Khan, Congress: 1
Bengaluru South	
L.S. Tejasvi Surya, BJP: 3	Sowmya Reddy, Congress: 6

Priyanka, Dingaleshwar Swami file nominations

The Hindu Bureau
HUBBALLI/BELAGAVI

Among those who filed nominations for the 14 constituencies going to polls on May 7 were Priyanka Jarkiholi, Congress candidate from Chikkodi, and Fakira Dingaleshwar Swami, Independent fighting against Union Minister Pralhad Joshi from Dharwad.

Ms. Jarkiholi has declared assets of around ₹9 crore and liabilities of around ₹1.5 crore. She has investments in at least 11 firms or companies.

But she does not own any vehicle. She has declared no inherited property.

Fakira Dingaleshwar Swami has declared assets of ₹9.75 crore and liabilities of ₹39.68 lakh. The seer owns a car, school van, and a tractor besides 7.8 kg silver articles and 19 gram gold ornament.

As per the affidavit, Dingaleshwar Swami has three criminal cases filed against him at Laxmeshwar Police Station in 2014 and 2015.

KIA named best regional airport in India and south Asia

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

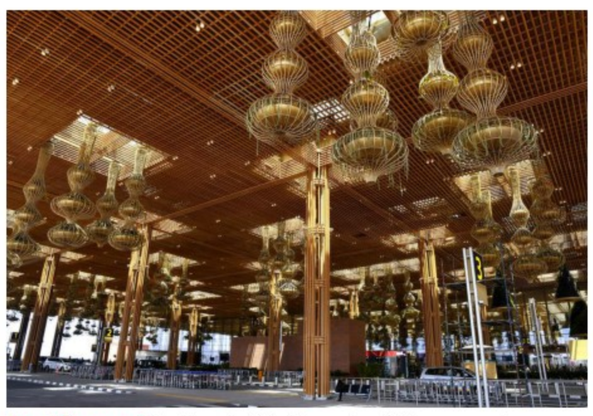
The Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) has been awarded the Best Regional Airport in India and South Asia at the 2024 Skytrax World Airport Awards.

Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL), the airport operator, said that this accolade is based on a comprehensive customer satisfaction survey.

KIA’s Terminal 2 also secured second position as the World’s Best New Airport Terminal for terminals opened in the 18 months prior to the 2024 World Airport Awards.

Slew of awards and honours

BIAL said that this award covers new airport terminals that have opened in the previous 18 months, and covers the full range of airport facilities, staff services and customer experience evaluation. Since opening in 2023, Terminal 2 has also received a UNESCO Prix Versailles World’s Most Beautiful Airport award along with a Special Prize for its interiors, LEED platinum certification, and more.


Feast for eyes: The Terminal 2 of Bengaluru’s Kempegowda International Airport. FILE PHOTO

Hari Marar, Managing Director and CEO of BIAL said, “Receiving the Best Regional Airport in India and South Asia, alongside T2’s recognition as one of the World’s Best New Airport Terminals by Skytrax, reaffirms our steadfast commitment to delivering exceptional services to our passengers. This recognition not only honors us but also serves as a driving force to further enhance the passenger experience at the Airport.”

“The global quality reputation for Bangalore Airport continues to grow, and this recognition from passengers is a fantastic celebration of the success achieved over the last 12 months. The opening of the landmark Terminal 2 facility in 2023 represented significant progress in the customer experience in Bangalore,” Edward Plaisted, CEO of Skytrax said.

Benchmark for airport excellence

The Skytrax World Airport

Assault: BJP blames ‘appeasement politics’

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The BJP workers held a protest in front of Vidyaranyapura police station on Thursday against those who allegedly assaulted three people who raised “Jai Shri Ram” slogans, even as Shobha Karandlaje, BJP candidate from Bengaluru North Lok Sabha constituency, jumped into the fray as well.

Ms. Karandlaje visited the houses of those assaulted in the incident and condemned the attack. “As per our information, youths from the Muslim community took objection to the boys raising ‘Jai Shri Ram’ slogans and later assaulted them. It was Ramanavami festival and our youths celebrate the festival in different ways,” she said.

Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly R. Ashok blamed “appeasement politics” of the State government for “rise in such incidents in the city” and said voters will teach the Congress a lesson in the elections.

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PERSONAL
CHANGE OF NAME

I, SARASWATHI, R/O No 86/4, 4th Main, 7th Cross, Rangappa Layout, BSK 3rd Stage, Bangalore–560085 Have Changed My name From Saraswathi To Saraswathi Nagaraja Rao Vide Affdvt Dated 17/04/2024

I, PRIYANKA Mohaney, D/o Prabhakar Mohane, R/at No.11, 1st Cross, Car Street, Halasuru, Bengaluru-560008, have changed my name from Priyanka Mohaney to Priyanka Mohane vide affidavit dated 06-04-2024 before Notary Kundan Babu.M, Bengaluru.

I, SIMRAN Rupreja, D/o. Pradeep Vashdev Rupreja, residing at #1101, Krishna apartments, 1st Floor, A1, 13th Cross, Indiranagar II Stage, Bengaluru 560038, have changed my name to Simran Pradeep Rupreja, vide affidavit dated: 16.04.2024, sworn before Notary Sivakumara.M.N, B'luru

PERSONAL
CHANGE OF NAME

I, ALEXANDER, S/o Anbu, R/at #238, 2nd Cross, Chikkanna Layout, near Indian Public School, Shampur Main Road, Bengaluru-45 have changed my name as Raja A, vide affidat dtd 18.04.2024 sworn before Notary Meer Hassan, Bluru

I, POOJESHREE, W/o.Sunil Nagaraja, r/at #18, 2nd Cross, Silver Oak Street, J.P.Nagara, 7th Phase, Bengaluru-560078, have changed my name as Poojashree.H vide affidavit dtd 18.04.2024 sworn before Notary S.I.Balaguru, Bluru

I, DIVYA Chandrasekaran, D/o. Chandrasekaran, Resident of No.50, 2nd Cross, Sector B, Ramaiah Reddy Colony, Basavanagar, Bengaluru-560037, have changed my name to Divya Chandrasekaran, D/o. Chandrasekaran.V, Vide affidavit dated: 18.04.2024 before notary M. Rajendra, Bengaluru.

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IN THE LIMELIGHT

The tryst between Dravidian politics and Tamil cinema

As Tamil Nadu heads for elections today, a closer look at the evolution of cinema as a medium for political propaganda and on those who have wielded this tool over time

Gopinath Rajendran

Cinema, in the form of documentaries, short films, feature films, and even animated cartoons, has long been used as a medium to shed light on major events or social conditions to inform and agitate the masses. Our Western counterparts have been utilising films since the days of World War I. In India, films on anti-British propaganda started the movement against British rule and to date, the medium has proved to be a formidable tool for spreading ideologies in the country, especially in Tamil Nadu where the lines between the two fields often crossover. The State has had five Chief Ministers from the world of cinema (excluding the current CM M.K. Stalin who tried his luck in acting with *Ore Raththam* in 1987).

A rich history: Udhayanidhi Stalin campaigning at Chintadripet on April 13. VEDHAN. M

The architects of this assemblage

Fascinatingly, the current ruling party of Tamil Nadu, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) was the one that understood the power of stage plays and films, such as *Thyaga Bhoomi* (1939) and *Mathru Bhoomi* (1939), to penetrate the minds of the masses before Independence. They began using films extensively, so much so that Indian National Congress leader K. Kamaraj asked if actors can manage presiding over a State. After Independence, four Congress leaders – including C. Rajagopalachari and Kamaraj – ruled the State until 1967 when administrative power went to the hands of Dravidian parties. C.N. Annadurai was the first leader from a Dravidian party to become Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu (then Madras State).

An excellent orator and writer, Annadurai pushed his ideologies through his writing that were made into films like *Velaikari* (1949), which was inspired by Alexandre Dumas' *The Count of Monte Cristo*, *Nallathambi* (1949) which was adapted from the Hollywood film *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town*, and *Or Iravu* (1951). The films focussed on the disparity between castes and classes and promoted social justice and education. Speaking of *Velaikari* and *Or Iravu*, their lead actor K.R. Ramasamy, who previously staged both stories as plays, is said to be the first Tamil actor to dabble in politics. Not only was he a close follower and confidante of Anna, but his plays – which he continued after turning into a film star – doubled as fundraisers for the DMK.

Parallely, M. Karunanidhi, who as a high school student created the Tamil Nadu Tamil Manavar Mandram, the Dravidian Movement's first student wing, turned into a screenwriter with the M.G. Ramachandran (MGR)-starrer *Rajakumari* (1947). For MGR, an emerging actor at the time who predominantly starred in romance and action films, it was Karunanidhi's writing in films such as *Maruthanad Elavarasee* (1950) and *Manthiri Kumari* (1950) that gave him his big break.

While we are at it, around the same time a young boy joined a drama troupe and worked his way up to play the lead in the stage play *Shivaji Kanda Hindu Rajyam* written by C.N. Annadurai in the 1940s that was presided over by Periyar E. V. Ramasami, who was then leading the Dravidar Kazhagam and the self-respect movement. It was he who christened this man, V.C. Ganesan, to Sivaji Ganesan.

When Sivaji Ganeshan made his film debut with *Parasakthi* (1952) – alongside another actor-politician S.S. Rajendran – penned by Karunanidhi, the film was so politically charged that the then-ruling State government demanded that the film should be banned. However, the film, which commented on the caste system, went on to acquire a cult status. By then many prolific actors such as N.S. Krishnan and M.R. Radha made sure their characters were an extension of their personal ideologies which aligned with the Dravidian movement.

The grand split

MGR, in 1972, founded the All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) as a breakaway faction from the DMK after an altercation with Karunanidhi. MGR's persona from films which portrayed him as a friend and saviour of the downtrodden mirrored his real-life actions where he carried out philanthropic services. This led to a landslide victory for the AIADMK in the 1977 State elections and MGR was Chief Minister until his death in 1987. Soon after his death, the party was split into two factions between his widow V. N. Janaki and Jayalalitha, a leading actor from 1965 whom MGR had collaborated with multiple times. When Janaki retired, Jayalalitha joined the two factions and served six terms as the Chief Minister.

A love-hate relationship

The direct equation the two fields of Tamil cinema and politics shared took a back seat after the death of MGR. The 90s, an important decade for Tamil cinema, saw very little on the political front by those from the film industry.

In the mid-90s, it was speculated that Rajinikanth might take the plunge into politics but the actor decided against it. Though he would go on to announce his entry into politics in 2017, he eventually dissolved his organisation in 2021 and affirmed that he won't be entering politics. His peer and close friend Kamal Haasan formed the centrist party Makkal Needhi Maiam in 2018. His party failed to win a seat in the 2021 Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly election, and despite securing 2.62% of the votes, Kamal himself lost in the Coimbatore South constituency by a slender margin. He opted out of this year's Lok Sabha elections and instead campaigned for the DMK-led alliance.

Over the last few decades, many actors gave politics a shot albeit with comparatively less success. Multihyphenate T. Rajendar, a long-time supporter of the DMK, launched his own party the All India Latchiya Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam. R. Sarathkumar established the All India Samathuva Makkal Katchi and had previously served as a member of the Rajya Sabha and the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly. He recently merged his party with the BJP. Actor Napoleon joined DMK and served as the Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment from 2009 to 2013. Director Seeman started the Naam Tamilar Iyakkam during the end of the Sri Lankan Civil War which has now become the Naam Tamilar Katchi and is fielding 39 candidates in the 2024 elections.

Cinema as politics

While many actors took the political plunge during and after their heyday within the film industry, there were a slew of actors/technicians who used the medium to reflect on the political situations of that particular era. Interestingly, most of them took the satirical route. Cho Ramaswamy was one of the earliest political satirists who infused jabs at that period's political moves in the films in which he starred as a comedian. It was also the underlying theme for his directorial *Muhammad bin Tughluq* (1971).

K. Balachander brought in a new wave of films which were centred on social themes and interpersonal relationships mostly with a woman protagonist. His film *Achamillai Achamillai* (1984) satirises the Indian political system and the toll it takes on small-time politicians while *Thanneer Thanneer* (1981) dealt with everyday problems caused by corruption. Probably the most famous film in the genre which has become synonymous with political satires has to be Manivannan's *Amaidhi Padai* (1994). With a strong political acumen, Manivannan's directorial ventures – like *Palaivana Rojakkal* (1986) written by M. Karunanidhi – as well as the supporting roles he played in *Thai Maaman* (1994), *Villadhi Villain* (1995), *Ellame En Pondattithaan* (1998) and *Mudhalvan* (1999) were replete with political references delivered comically.

The late 90s and early 2000s saw a plethora of political films such as biopics on yesteryear political leaders as well as fictional takes such as *Makkal Aatchi* (1995) and a slew of Shankar films on social issues like *Gentleman* (1993), *Indian* (1996), *Mudhalvan*, *Anniyan* (2005) and *Sivaji: The Boss* (2007). Mani Ratnam, apart from making films such as *Roja* (1992) and Bombay (1995) that have politics as a canvas on which his plots are mounted, also made *Iruvar* (1997), inspired by the lives of Karunanidhi, MGR and Jayalalithaa, which has become a textbook example of political dramas in Tamil cinema. In the contemporary Tamil film scene, there have been a fair share of political satires such as *Saguni* (2012), *Joker* (2016) and *Tughlaq Durbar* (2021) as well as entertainers with a political backdrop like *Ko* (2011), *Kodi* (2016), *Sarkar* (2018), and *Kodiyil Oruvan* (2021).

A new wave on the horizon

In the last decade, filmmakers like Pa Ranjith, Mari Selvaraj (with films such as *Pariyerum Perumal*, *Karnan* and *Maamannan*) and Vetrimaaran (*Visaranai*, *Asuran* and *Viduthalai*) have introduced Tamil film audiences to a new wave of socio-political films that put anti-caste themes in the front and centre of Tamil cinema. Ranjith – whose directorials include politically charged films like *Madras*, *Kaala* and *Natchathiram Nagargiradhu* – apart from also producing such films, extends his social work in various forms like the Neelam Cultural Center and Vaanam Art Festival. Apart from them, works of filmmakers like Ram, Manikandan, Raju Murugan, Gopi Nainar and Lenin Bharathi have held a mirror to the sociopolitical issues and how they plague the lives of commoners.

Tamil cinema's tryst with its purveyors doubling it as a launch pad into politics shows no signs of stopping. The son of the State's current Chief Minister, Udhayanidhi, who entered the film industry as a producer and distributor-turned-actor, contested and won in the 2021 elections before being sworn in as Minister in Youth Welfare and Sports Development.

Probably the biggest announcement from the world of Tamil film in recent times came earlier this year when Vijay announced the launch of his political party, Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam. The actor, who announced his foray into politics at the peak of his career, declared that his party would enter the electoral fray in the 2026 Tamil Nadu Assembly elections.

2024 marks the 80th year of Periyar starting Dravidar Kazhagam which gave rise to the parties that have ruled the State since 1967. Cinema and politics, in various degrees of intensity, have remained intertwined since then.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

K. Subrahmanian

"Cloak and dagger operation (K. V. Ramakrishna Rao, Khammam)"

" 'Cloak and dagger operation' is 'an operation dealing with or suggesting adventure and exciting mystery.'

This is a cloak-and-dagger story.

A cloak is a loose sleeveless garment which 'is fastened under the throat and covers most of the body.' It can cover several things, including a dagger. When 'cloak' is used figuratively, it means 'a thing that hides'.

The whole thing was done under a cloak of secrecy.

'Cloak' is also used as a verb.

His mission is cloaked in mystery.

A 'cloakroom' is a room where outdoor clothes like coats and hats are left for a short time in a theatre, restaurant and the like. It is also a room in a railway station where one's luggage may be left for a short time. In American English, 'checkroom' is used. In British English, 'cloakroom' is also used euphemistically to refer to the toilet in a public building."

"Lingua Franca (K. Sriram, Delhi)"

" 'Lingua franca' is 'a language adopted as a common language between speakers whose native languages are different'. English serves as a lingua franca in some parts of the world."

"Tweedledum and Tweedledee (C. V. Subbavadhanulu, Nuzvid)

"It means 'a pair of persons or things nominally different but practically the same.' These were two names coined by John Byrom (1692-1763), who used them in a satirical poem to criticise quarrelling musicians. There was practically no difference in their performance. The names were popularised by Lewis Carrol who used them in his *Through the Looking-Glass* (1871). Now the term is used figuratively when one wants to refer to insignificant differences.

You have to choose between Tweedledum and Tweedledee.

"Please refer to your 'Know your English' column of August 20. You were discussing 'cop'. Allow me to point out that 'cop' is in fact an abbreviated form of 'constable on patrol.' This abbreviation was first used in England and now everywhere. (Upasana Sahoo, Hanamkonda)"

"I like your ingenious explanation. But I am sorry to disappoint you by saying that 'cop' is not from 'constable on patrol.' It is from the Latin root 'capere' – 'to take,' 'to arrest'. 'Constable' has a different story, it is from the Latin 'comes stabuli' – 'count of the stable'. A constable was originally a master of horses. As horses were considered important a person who was in charge of them was also considered important.

'Constable' was the highest military title under the kings of France. In England, a 'constable' was a governor of a fortress. Even now the person who looks after the Tower of London is called constable. During the Tudor times, 'constable' referred to a parish priest. Later it came to mean 'a policeman.'

The Constable of France was the Commander-in-Chief of the Army for four centuries from the 14th. In England, the Constable of England or Lord High Constable is an officer appointed for coronation days."

Published in The Hindu on October 1, 1991.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

On April 19, 1975, India's first satellite 'Aryabhata' was launched into space

Vasudevan Mukunth

QUESTION 1

An important reason this mission was possible was the Soviet Union's offer to launch the satellite for free. While he had some apprehensions at first, the then chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation got on board with 'Aryabhata' before representatives from the two countries signed the launch agreement. Name him.

QUESTION 2

To memorialise the India-Soviet Union friendship, the USSR in 1984 issued a postage stamp featuring Aryabhata and two other Indian satellites launched onboard Soviet rockets. Name them.

QUESTION 3

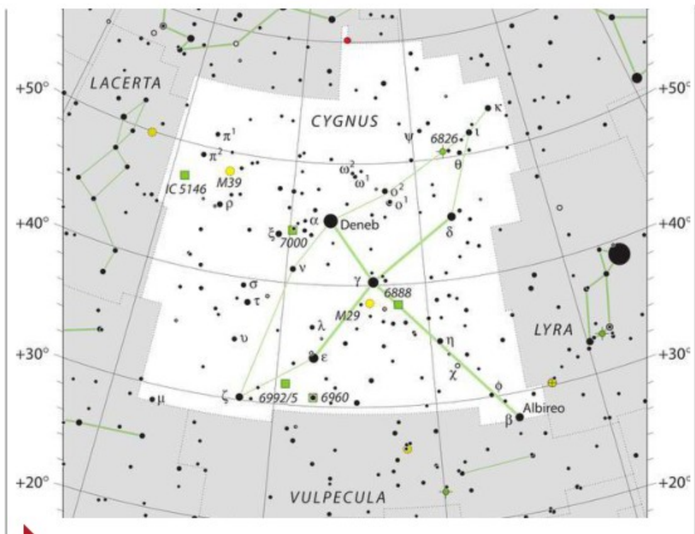
Name the area on the outskirts of Bengaluru (then Bangalore) that U.R. Rao, the 'Aryabhata' project director from the India side, selected as the location for the Indian Scientific Satellite Project, where 'Aryabhata' would be built.

QUESTION 4

In 1972, the task of building 'Aryabhata' faced a political problem: there was strong opposition to moving equipment from the Satellite Systems Division in X to the new Bengaluru facility, despite a parliamentary assurance that it would be returned after the launch. Name the city X.

QUESTION 5

In March 1975, a month before the launch date, a panel recommended three names for the satellite. One, of course was 'Aryabhata', which Prime Minister Indira Gandhi picked. Name the other two options.



Visual question:
Very close to the star Eta Cygni in the sky is a powerful and famous source of X-rays. Aryabhata's instruments were able to measure these X-rays despite the satellite's four-day lifespan. Name the source.

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. This freedom fighter is famous for his role in ushering the Green Revolution as Union Agriculture Minister. **Ans: C. Subramaniam**
2. This popular leader from Tamil Nadu, first made his entry into Parliament from Srivilliputur in 1952. **Ans: K. Kamaraj**
3. This thespian was twice elected to the Lok Sabha on the Congress ticket in the 1980s. **Ans: Vyjayanthimala Bali**
4. This leader is the author of the novel *Kavalkottam* that was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award for Tamil in 2011. **Ans: Su Venkatesan, CPI(M)**
5. This leader held portfolios as Union Minister in BJP led governments. **Ans: Rangarajan Kumaramangalam**
Visual: Identify this five-time member of Parliament. **Ans: Murasoli Maran from the DMK**
Early Birds: Rajmohan.V| Prashant Nain| Saheni George| Sadhan Kumar Panda| Binu Peter

Word of the day

Purloin:
make off with belongings of others

Synonyms: pinch, lift, sneak, pilfer

Usage: *She must have purloined a purse for the event.*

Pronunciation: bit.ly/purloinpro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /pɜːˈlɔɪn/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

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Shrinking RTE quota: Private schools just a dream for many

For the academic year 2024-25, not a single private school in Bengaluru falls under the RTE quota. This has left many parents, who had dreams of their children studying in the upscale English-medium schools, shattered. **Jayanth R. and Jahnavi T.R.** look at what has led to this scenario

"I am a driver and my daughter is six and has to be admitted to class 1. I was hoping my daughter would enrol in a good private school through the RTE (Right To Education) Act quota. But no private schools in our ward are covered under RTE this year. I cannot afford the private school fees. I don't know what to do," Nagaraj, a parent from Banashankari in south Bengaluru, said, feeling disappointed and helpless.

Among the most debated provisions of the RTE Act is setting aside 25% of seats in private schools for children belonging to weaker sections and disadvantaged groups. While the legislation promised free and compulsory education for all children until the completion of elementary schooling, this specific provision also opened the doors of private schools for children from all sections. The Act was enacted in 2009, and the rules for the Act were framed and implemented in Karnataka from April 28, 2012.

Under this system, the Department of School Education and Literacy (DSEL) invites applications from eligible candidates for the selection of RTE seats, which are allocated through a lottery system. However, one can apply for RTE seats only within the neighbourhood or ward, with specified distance criteria. The government reimburses the children's fees. In the academic year 2018-19, a total of 14,000 private schools across Karnataka had to give 1,20,055 RTE quota seats.

Decline in number of seats

However, it all changed when some rules under the Act were amended in 2018. Rule 4 was changed, which meant that if there is a government or a government-aided school within the limits of any ward or neighbourhood, private unaided schools are not recognised as "neighbourhood schools" where seats should be made available under the RTE quota. The amended Act came into force on January 30, 2019.

Since then, the number of seats available in private schools has steadily declined. In 2019-20, the number of RTE schools in Karnataka fell to 268, and the number of RTE seats decreased to 14,372. Only 4,699 students enrolled in schools.

In Bengaluru, after the amendment of the RTE Act, only 27 private schools came under RTE, especially in Girinagar and Ganesh Mandir wards. After delimitation in 2022, the number of schools declined to four. After the delimitation of wards in 2023, these four schools were also exempted from RTE.

Thus, in the academic year 2024-25, there isn't a single private school in Bengaluru that can give RTE quota seats. That is because, after the latest delimitation of wards, all wards have government or aided schools within the prescribed distance criteria.

For 2024-25, as always, DSEL invited online applications from eligible candidates RTE Act, but no private school showed up on the list. This is what has left parents like Nagaraj distraught, who see English medium education in a private school as a window of opportunity for upward mobility.

> Parents want private schools with good facilities. Once they see what is being offered in such schools, they do not feel like sending their children to government or aided schools.
>
> -- **NAGASIMHA G. RAO,** Director, Child Rights Trust.

There are over 3,500 private schools in Bengaluru, and no schools will enrol children under RTE Act in 2024-25. Besides government schools, only 172 government-aided private schools are covered under RTE Act this year. BHAGYA PRAKASH K.

There are over 3,500 private schools in Bengaluru, which has two educational districts – North and South – and no schools here will enrol children under the RTE Act in 2024-25. Besides government schools, only 172 government-aided private schools are covered under the RTE Act for this year.

"Although there are many private schools in my neighbourhood, they are not covered by the RTE Act. There is only one government-aided school in our jurisdiction. I want to enrol my son in LKG, and I have applied to this school because it is close to my house," said another parent, Niranjan Murthy, from Jayanagar in south Bengaluru, who is not sure of getting a seat even there.

Since 2019-20, most seats have been available only in aided schools under RTE, and parents are reluctant to enrol their children in these schools. So, many RTE quota seats remain vacant.

Many child rights activists who have been involved in helping parents get access to RTE seats have also noticed the decline in interest. "I used to get 25 calls every day before the amendment from parents seeking advice about RTE, application process, etc. Now, I rarely get any calls. No one is interested in these seats anymore," noted Nagasimha G. Rao, Director, Child Rights Trust.

He added, "Parents want private schools with good facilities. Once they see what is being offered in such schools, they do not feel like sending their children to government or aided schools. The only ones who are still seeking RTE seats in government-aided schools are those parents who do not know what aided schools are. There is also the problem of some aided schools pressuring parents to pay fees under various heads, which leads to them pulling their children out of such schools. I have seen a few such cases."

"Last year, RTE seats were available in four private schools in the city. However, after the delimitation of BBMP wards in 2023, these four schools are also out of RTE coverage. Dreams of thousands of deserving poor students who wish to study in private schools have vanished," said B.N. Yogananda, General Secretary of RTE Students' and Parents' Association.

The Association has gone to court on this issue. While the High Court of Karnataka upheld the decision of the government to amend rules, it has been further challenged in the Supreme Court where the case is still pending.

A senior official of the Department of School Education and Literacy (DSEL) admitted that this year, there won't be a single private school under RTE in Bengaluru North or South Educational Districts.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, B.B. Cauvery, Commissioner of the Department of Public Instruction, said they had received many complaints in this regard. "Many parents have complained about this issue to the department. So, we will submit the report in this regard to the government," she said.

Why the new rule

Ever since the quota system in private schools was ushered in under the RTE Act, there have been allegations that enrolment of students in government, government-aided, and Kannada medium schools had declined, owing to parents' eagerness to educate their children in private, English-medium schools. The Kannada Development Authority also gave a report to the State government on this issue. In addition, the government had to reimburse private schools with ₹1,600 crore annually for the education of RTE quota children.

In light of these issues, the government decided to amend the RTE Act in 2017. Though the then-Congress government abandoned the amendment in the face of strong opposition from parents, in 2018, the Congress-JD (S) coalition government amended it.

"By 2016-17, around 4.5 lakh students were studying from classes 1 to 8 under the RTE Act. We felt that spending ₹1,600 crore on only 25% of seats in a handful of English medium schools was skewed when the same resources could be used for upgrading and improving schools in general. At the same time, the enrollment in government, aided, and Kannada medium schools had declined," said V.P. Niranjanaradhya, developmental educationist and a member of the then Kannada Development Authority.

It was also alleged that some private schools were behind the amendment of the RTE Act, as many had initially refused to offer RTE seats. The government's reimbursement fee is no match for the amount they collect from parents whose children enrol through the regular admission process. There were also allegations of discrimination against RTE quota children in some schools, given their class and caste backgrounds.

While parents in Bengaluru have the option to at least opt for aided schools, those in several other districts only have government schools now for RTE admissions. Kalappa Naik (name changed), a private school teacher in a village in Yadgir district and the father of three children, questioned why his children should not sit with the children of the elite and get good quality education in a private school under the RTE quota.

"It often feels like the focus in government schools is only on things like *bisi oota* (mid-day meals) and implementation of government schemes rather than education. The government's amendment to the RTE Act snatched away the opportunity to get quality education from many children like mine," Naik said. While one of his children has finished schooling until the 9th grade under the RTE quota, he has now admitted his younger ones to private schools, even though it burdens him financially, since the RTE quota is no longer an option.

Differing on this issue, a DSEL official said, "Most of the government and aided schools have good infrastructure and provide quality education. We are also serving midday meals to all the children and providing shoes, socks and books. Our teachers are very well qualified, compared to the private schools. So, parents should not be fooled by the building and fancy infrastructure of private schools."

What government can do

How can a balance be achieved between Naik's aspirations for his children to study in private schools and the need to nourish government schools and ensure fair funding for education in general?

Suggests Niranjanaradhya, "On the model of the Delhi Education Act, 1973, the State government should issue an order to provide 25% of the seats to poor children in that neighbourhood if the Bengaluru Development Authority allocates the Civic Amenity sites or land is given on lease to private educational institutions by the government or other local bodies. No government should pay for these seats. This will fulfil the real intent of the RTE Act. This way even poor children will get an opportunity to study in elite schools."

If you have been looking to make the switch to organic produce, here is a starter guide of three players in Bengaluru

The farm in a box

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Tired of ordering your groceries from online e-commerce portals that offer 10-minute deliveries but stale produce? Perhaps it is time to make the switch to a subscription-based produce provider who promptly sends a basket of vegetables and fruits of your choice every week.

You may pay a slight premium when compared to mainstream aggregators, but you are assured of quality, chemical-free produce. Having said that, choosing the right platform does not come easy: checking whose product is the freshest, and wading through clunky apps and poor customer care service.

We look at a few who have been around:

Bhoomi Farms

Bhoomi Farms was launched in 2022 by Shankar Venkataraman who has been practising organic farming in India from 2015. "I was farming in the US for eight years prior to this, and after coming to India I noticed that it's hard to fetch a good price for high-quality organic produce by selling it through middlemen."

While he admits that cutting off middlemen involves a lot of work: grading, packing, building a website, sales, digital marketing and brand building, Shankar says "it's worth the effort".

Which is why his brand – with prompt delivery and fresh produce – is a popular name in the city. "Our farm-grown greens and salads made with products grown at our farm are very popular," says Shankar, whose platform offers a-la carte and a vegetable box membership. The latter, he says, is different from a subscription as the membership allows customers to choose vegetables at a better price.

He explains Bhoomi's farmer partners – in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu – are provided seeds, seedlings, farming inputs, and agronomy services by agronomists. "Once crops are ready to harvest, we take all the crops to ensure the farmer gets income above his cost of production."

Shankar says the farmers require stable support prices to continue their work, and "Bhoomi ensures that by working in the field with farmers. Our agronomists completely control how the vegetables are grown and visit the farms daily".

bhoomi.farm/

Spudnik Farms

"In a world where everyone claims to have the freshest and organic fruit and vegetables, there just aren't enough trusted or reliable sources of fresh produce," says Sumeet Kaur, CEO of Spudnik Farms that kickstarted operations in 2019. "Although I have been practising agriculture since 2013, my initial experiments in growing and supplying produce to friends and acquaintances made me realise that there is a huge gap between the quality of food urban consumers eat and the high prices we pay for them," says the agriculturist who has witnessed the tremendous pressures that farmers operate under.

Green goodness By eliminating the middleman, these organic produce providers help both the farmer and the consumer. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

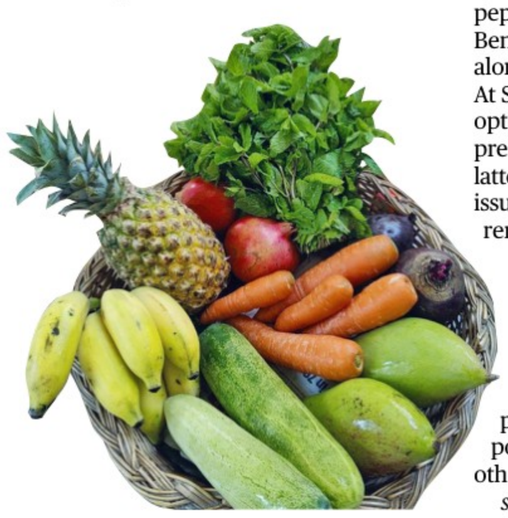
This, coupled with the negative impact of climate change prompted her to launch the brand as a subscription service that delivers local produce directly from farmers to consumers in the city.

Sumeet works with farmers in Chikkaballapur, Nelamangala and Joida in Uttara Kannada – a mix of individual farmers and farmer collectives. "We focus on small and marginal farmers. Those who have less than five acres of land and face challenges in accessing markets for their produce," she adds.

Unlike other players who offer varied buying options, Sumeet says her reason to go the subscription model way was to ensure consumers "stop viewing food as a commodity and start seeing the inherent value in food and the work put in by farmers". A subscription model allows this, she says, as it creates a direct link with farmers, and consumers are aware of who is growing their food.

"For farmers, subscription guarantees a market for the produce and ensures better cash flow since it enables farmers to grow multiple crops. Customers get fresher food because of a shorter supply chain and get to try produce which might be otherwise unavailable in the market," she says.

spudnikfarms.com



Sahaja Organics

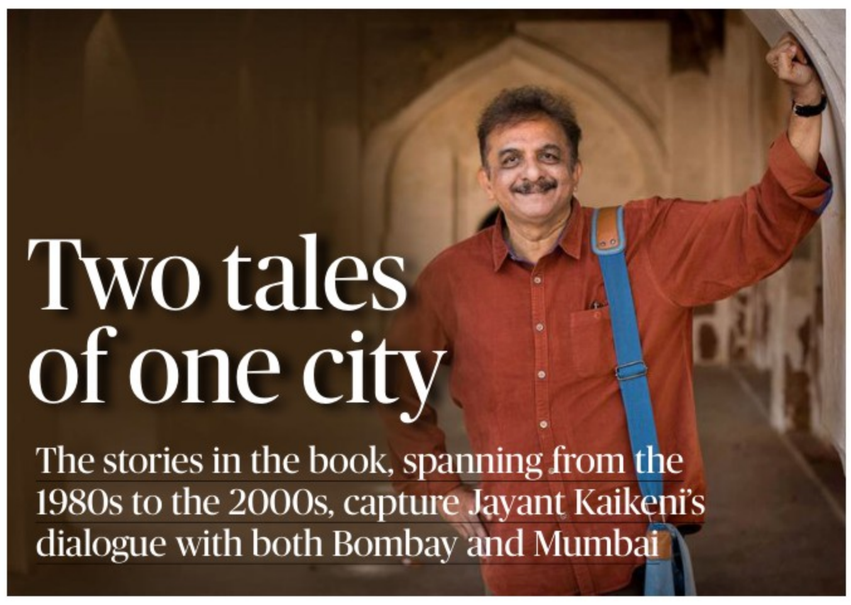
In 2010, a group of organic producers in Karnataka came together to form the Sahaja Samrudha Organic Producer Company Ltd (SSOPCL) to enhance the economic viability of small-scale farms in the State. Somesh B, CEO of Sahaja Organics, a brand formed in 2018, says the wing was created to offer consumers a wide range of high-quality, nutritious food at fair prices.

Today, the platform offers produce from a wide network of over 2,000 individual organic farmers and 20 organic producer groups located across Karnataka and various regions of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, and West Bengal.

Their most popular products include rice varieties such as Rajamudi rice, red rice, black rice; oil variants; a range of millets; spices such as turmeric, cumin and pepper; pulses including *toor dal*, Bengal Gram, *chana dal*, etc.; alongside fresh vegetables and fruits. At Sahaja, customers have the option to shop a-la carte or pre-order on an app (Briclay). The latter, however, is quite clunky and issues with regards to delivery slots remain.

With over 3,000 existing customers and "20% new enquiries every month", Somesh says he is now working with women groups to manufacture value-added products such as chutney, masala powders, millet products, among others.

sahajaorganics.com/



Two tales of one city

The stories in the book, spanning from the 1980s to the 2000s, capture Jayant Kaikeni's dialogue with both Bombay and Mumbai

Praveen Sudevan
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Jayant Kaikini, a seasoned storyteller and a true connoisseur of Mumbai's culture, embarks on a journey through the city's heart, using his narrative compass to unveil its soul. He sees the city's everyday simplicity not just as a way of life but as a spiritual experience.

"Bombay, in its own unique way, simplifies life, even in its language," he says, from Mumbai.

Jayant reflects on the city's collective spirit, where its people readily step forward in moments of need. According to him, this communal ethos, steeped in mutual assistance and a mindset purified of petty disparities, is the true essence of Mumbai.

Jayant's latest anthology, *Mithun Number Two and Other Mumbai Stories* (published by Eka), translated by Tejaswini Niranjana (from Kannada to English), is not about the city per se. Yet the stories, spanning from the 1980s to the 2000s, capture the author's dialogue with both Bombay and Mumbai.

Growing up in Gokarna, Jayant's storytelling journey was nurtured amidst the blossoming of modern Kannada literature, pollinated by writers like P Lankesh and Girish Karnad.

In *Mithun Number Two and Other Mumbai Stories*, the role of Tejaswini Niranjana's translation is pivotal. She skillfully channels the original's lyrical prose and deep emotional resonance, offering readers a window into Bombay's soul through her translation, thereby emphasising the crucial role of translation in making literature accessible to a global audience.

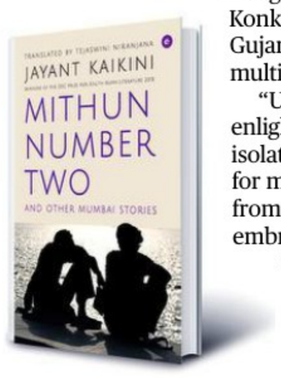
"Collaborating with Tejaswini on translations has been a seamless experience, mainly because she is a poet herself. Not only has she published poetry collections and translated Pablo Neruda into Kannada, but her poetic sensibility aligns closely with mine. She creates the first draft, and we jointly decide which stories to include," adds Jayant.

The duo's previous collaboration, *No Presents Please,* another volume of selected Mumbai stories, became the first book in translation to have won the DSC South Asian Literature Prize in 2018.

His Bombay is a city of contrasts and confluences, where the cacophony of languages and the jostle of cultures blend into a harmonious symphony. "Bombay's diversity and liberating atmosphere profoundly impacted me," Kaikini reflects. His stories, set against the city's multifaceted backdrop, dance through its languages – Kannada, Konkani, Hindi, Marathi, and Gujarati – mirroring his own multi-lingual journey.

"Unlike those who seek enlightenment in serene isolation, true enlightenment, for me, lies not in retreating from the world but in embracing the chaos of life," he says.

Bombay is, therefore, more than just a home for Jayant; it's been his spiritual guide.



City dweller, language explorer Jayant Kaikini and his latest book. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Ode to clean consumerism

The Paper Boat Collective with its environmental consciousness and mindful production, has begun a shop-in-shop concept in Indiranagar

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"You feel good when you shop," says Mridula Pai, founder of the thrift label Love Me Twice, the first branch of which is in Kolkata in 2020. She has also recently opened Love Me Twice's second shop in Bengaluru at the Paper Boat Collective (PBC), a retail space with environmental consciousness, ethics and mindful production at its core.

Creating a pleasant shopping experience, unlike the usual thrifting experience, is key to the brand; Mridula firmly believes that this is sabsolutely essential for thrift to become mainstream. "We are competing with normal labels, so things like music, how a shop smells, looks... all of it is important," says Mridula. "We have all sorts of labels, but the aesthetic value drives the curation," she says.

The new Love Me Twice store, nestled in the basement of a charming, tree-flanked bungalow in Indiranagar, reflects her viewpoint. The store is filled with racks of freshly-pressed clothes, a shelf dedicated to beautifully displayed luxury products as well as a range of bags, jewellery, and shoes, while soothing music plays in the background. "Thrifting must be the whole package, or we won't stand a chance of it becoming normal."

Earth care No Nasties (right) is one of the pre-loved brands showcased at Love Me Twice (above). SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The Love Me Twice store is one of the several new offerings at PBC, launched in the city on March 23 to mark the store's pivot to a new format: creating a mall-like version of sustainable brands.

Bhagyashree Patwardhan, the founder and creative director of PBC, explains its rationale. "When I started Paper Boat Collective 11 years ago (in Goa), I told myself that I would not do anything that did not fit in my conscience," says Bhagyashree, who chose to fill her store with handmade products made with natural materials sourced from small-scale businesses and people working with artisans within the country. "We have always tried to be as sustainable, organic and zero waste, as possible, and have maintained that value system," she says.

While this ethos continues, she also realised that unlike the leisurely vibe of Goa, a city's energy is somewhat different.

"People are in a hurry. I have also realised that if they are making the trek, they would like to have multiple offerings," says Bhagyashree, who believes that this new shop-in-shop model, where multiple brands with a similar value system are grouped together, works well. "The aesthetic sensibility, offering and temperament must be the same," she adds.

Besides PBC and Love Me Twice, three other brands are housed in the same space. These include a plant-based cafe, Copper + Cloves, which has been around since 2022, as well as bespoke cosmetic brand Tinge, which offers cruelty-free, vegan makeup, and No Nasties, the country's first fair-trade certified apparel brand, working with factories that ensure no child labour and no forced exploitation of workers.

Apurva Kothari, the founder of No Nasties, says that this is the brand's third physical store, with the first two being in Goa. "While obviously, our reach is bigger online, it is such a different experience to have a physical store, both for customers and for us," he says, pointing out that as a purpose-driven brand, having face-to-face conversations with customers is amazing.

Kothari, adds "We have always been a slow, conscious brand that focusses on maximising what we can give back to the community."

STEPOUT

Take a spin

Monkey Bar presents an exclusive DJ night with Clitus Nathan. Clitus has been a DJ for three decades. Having started in 1994, he has held residencies at Bengaluru's UFO, UrbanEdge, SPINN, JJ's, and Fuga to name a few. The event is a part of the ongoing monthly series Monkey Legend, which celebrates Bengaluru's finest DJs.

On April 19, 8pm at Monkey Bar, Museum Road. Call 8655464500 for details and reservations.

Groovy tunes

This weekend, unwind with an event called Turbulence V3 at Indiranagar SOCIAL.

It promises to be a night of hypnotic and hard grooving techno music, complemented by Vision of Sound's Audio Reactive visuals. The event will presented on April 21, 7pm onwards. The venue will be Indiranagar SOCIAL, HAL 3rd Stage.

Tickets are available on Insider and you can also call 8657896572/73 for details.

Seizures touch ₹400 crore since March 16

In a major pre-poll seizure on Thursday, the Election Commission flying squad seized ₹17.98 crore from a house at Dasanakoppa Circle in Dharwad. Overall, the EC has made total seizures worth over ₹400.32 crore since March 16 when the model code of conduct (MCC) came into force in Karnataka. This includes cash, liquor, drugs, and precious metals.

After the MCC came into force, the amount of cash seized was ₹74.64 crore, while liquor worth ₹175.88 crore, narcotics worth ₹10.63 crore and freebies worth ₹8.13 crore were seized, said a release from the office of the Chief Electoral Officer, Karnataka.

A total of 1,872 FIRs have been registered with regard to seizures of cash, liquor, drugs, precious metals and freebies. As many as 1,578 vehicles have been seized.

Unaccounted for cash seized from a house in Ballari.

BJP petitions EC against DKS

The BJP State unit on Thursday filed a complaint with the EC Commission against Deputy CM D.K. Shivakumar, accusing him of trying to lure voters living in big apartment complexes in Bengaluru city coming under the Bengaluru Rural LS constituency with a promise of sanctioning development works. Referring to a particular instance, the complaint said Mr. Shivakumar had promised to sanction a CA site to the dwellers of an apartment complex. The BJP also accused him of issuing a "threat" to vote for his brother D.K. Suresh, who is contesting from Bengaluru Rural. The BJP also filed a complaint against RDPR Minister Priyank Kharge for allegedly promising the people of Kalaburagi to develop the city as a agricultural hub at a cost of ₹39 crore in the six months.

> There is so much tumult in the Karnataka Congress that there is no need for any external force to bring it down.
>
> **JAGADISH SHETTAR,** former CM and BJP nominee from Belagavi

Many vote from home

Over 95% (46,577) of the 48,609 senior citizens aged above 85 and persons with disabilities, who had opted to vote from home, have exercised their franchise in the 14 Lok Sabha constituencies in Karnataka that go to the polls on April 26.

Vote-from-home facility ended on Thursday in the 14 constituencies.

> It is Deve Gowda's illusion that the State govt. will fall after the elections. The govt. is secure for five years and we will win again.
>
> **SIDDARAMAIAH,** Chief Minister

Actor Darshan Toogudeepa campaigning for Congress candidate Venkataramane Gowda at Malavalli in Mandya district on Thursday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Now, Darshan campaigns for 'Star Chandru' in Mandya

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

In a reversal, popular Kannada actor Darshan Toogudeepa, who had campaigned for Independent candidate Sumalatha Ambareesh in Mandya in 2019, on Thursday campaigned for Congress candidate Venkataramane Gowda, popularly known as 'Star Chandru', in the constituency where the former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy is the candidate of the BJP-JD(S) combine.

The star's campaign for 'Star Chandru' at Malavalli in the constituency came a day after Congress leader Rahul Gandhi addressed a rally in Mandya that attracted a large crowd. Mr. Darshan has a large following in the region. He, along with other film stars, including Yash, had campaigned for Ms. Sumalatha during the last elections. It was a high-voltage battle as Mr. Kumaraswamy's son Nikhil Kumaraswamy was then in the poll fray. Ms. Sumalatha, who joined the BJP recently, had won the poll that witnessed a fierce fight. The BJP had given outside support to Ms. Sumalatha.

Ms. Sumalatha, who is now supporting the NDA, is yet to campaign in Mandya. She had shared the dais with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda along with the alliance candidates, including Mr. Kumaraswamy, at a rally in Mysuru.

Support for individual

Mr. Darshan, who has been a big support to the Mandya MP, told mediapersons that he would have campaigned for Ms. Sumalatha if she had contested. He added that he came for the campaign as he knew MLAs P.M. Narendra Swamy and Uday, and the Congress candidate, refusing to attach any party affiliation to his campaign. Mr. Darshan's roadshow in Malavalli was well received with a large number of people thronging the villages where his procession passed through.

HC stays FIR against Raghavendra

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The High Court of Karnataka has stayed a first information report (FIR) registered against B.Y. Raghavendra, BJP candidate for the Shivamogga Lok Sabha constituency, by the Chitradurga Rural police for allegedly creating enmity through his speech and misusing a religious institution for election campaigning in violation of the mode code of conduct.

Justice Krishna S. Dixit passed the interim order on a petition filed by Mr. Raghavendra, who has questioned the legality of the FIR registered on March 23 based on a complaint by an official attached to an election flying squad. The FIR was registered in relation to Mr. Raghavendra's visit to Bhovi Gurupeeta in Chitradurga last month and the speech that he made. It was also alleged that a religious institution was illegally used for political campaigning without obtaining permission.

Pointing out that the contentions raised in the petition require a deeper examination, the court said a *prima facie* case had been made out for staying the FIR and all further proceedings.

Number of women fielded by major political parties remains in single digit

There has been a significant increase in the number of women voters over the years. It has gone up from 55.13 lakh in 1962 to 2.7 crore this year

LOW REPRESENTATION

Afshan Yasmeen
BENGALURU

Women in Karnataka outnumber men in 17 of the 28 parliamentary constituencies as per the final electoral rolls, but political representation continues to be low. Although the number of women fielded by prominent political parties (BJP, Congress and JD-S) has gone up from four in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls to eight this time, representation is still low when compared with the female voter population of 2.7 crore in the State.

While the Congress has fielded six women – Sowmya Reddy, Anjali Nimbalkar, Samyukta S. Patil, Priyanka Jharkiholi, Prabha Mallikarjun, and Geetha Shivrajkumar – the BJP has fielded incumbent MP Shobha Karandlaje and Gayatri Siddheshwar. The JD(S), which is in an alliance with the BJP, has not fielded any woman.

In the 2019 elections, four women – Ms. Karandlaje (who was the BJP candidate for Udupi-Chikkamagaluru), Sumalatha Ambareesh (who won as an Independent candidate in Mandya), Veena Kashappanavar (who lost as the Congress candidate in Bagalkot) and Sunita Devanand Chavan (who lost as JD-S candidate in Vijayapura) – had made it to the list.

Meanwhile, the number of women voters has gone up significantly over the years. From 55.13 lakh in 1962, the number of women voters touched 2.5 crore in 2023 and has further increased to 2.7 crore this year. Women voters outnumber men in Udupi-Chikkamagaluru, Tumakuru, Davangere, Kolar, Hassan, Shivamogga, Chamarajanagar, Mandya, Bagalkot, Dakshina Kannada, Koppal, Chitradurga, Ballari, Belagavi, Chikkaballapur, Raichur, and Mysuru.

Zero-sum game

Tara Krishnaswamy, co-founder of Political Shakti, a non-partisan group working to improve women's representation in politics, said politics has become a zero-sum game in India. "It is not difficult for women to win once they have a party platform, but getting the party backing is a huge challenge. Local leaders do not want to recommend women as candidates since that would mean a man losing his seat. But, data shows that women have won elections at a higher percentage than men in every election since 1957," she said.

Shobha Karandlaje, BJP candidate from Bengaluru North constituency, with party MLA C.N. Ashwath Narayan during their visit to the dhobi ghat at Vyalikaval in Bengaluru as part of campaign for the Lok Sabha election. ANI

Arguing that women have the competence to govern and bring valuable diversity to politics, she said the only change we have seen in the last 75 years is in local bodies.

K.S. Vimala, State vice-president, Janawadi Mahila Sangathane, said patriarchy is so deeply entrenched that women have to prove themselves before even getting their rightful share of the ticket. "It is unfortunate that the scenario has not changed much despite the women's reservation Bill being passed in Parliament. Every party voted for it but they are not interested in practising it," she said.

She said even the ones who have made it to the official candidates' list are those who come from political families or have patronage. "Winnability may be the criteria but no woman from the grassroots has been given an opportunity. Yet, we should not lose heart. We should continue to fight for our rights with the hope of bringing a systematic change in ensuring greater representation for women," she added.

Winners from State

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

After 15 years, two women candidates from Karnataka – Shobha Karandlaje from Udupi-Chikkamagaluru and Sumalatha Ambareesh from Mandya – made it to the Lok Sabha in 2019. In 2004, Tejaswini Gowda had won as the Congress candidate from the erstwhile Kanakapura constituency against JD(S) supremo H.D. Deve Gowda, and Manorama Madhwaraj had won from Udupi on the BJP ticket.

In the 2014 Lok Sabha polls, Ms. Karandlaje was the only one to win a seat. Likewise, in the 2009 elections, J. Shantha from the BJP was the lone woman MP from Karnataka.

From Karnataka, the best representation of women in Parliament was in 1991 when three MPs were elected – Basavarajeshwari, D.K. Taradevi, and Chandraprabha Urs. The lowest representation was in 1990 and 1998 when no woman made it to Parliament from the State.

The first woman to be elected to the Lok Sabha from Karnataka was Sarojini Mahishi in 1962 when she won from Dharwad North Lok Sabha constituency. She was re-elected in 1967, 1971, and 1977. The former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was elected from Chikkamagaluru in 1977.

Unique caste mix makes prediction difficult here

Sharath S. Srivatsa
TUMAKURU

In Karnataka politics, where the land-owning Vokkaliga and Veerashaiva-Lingayat communities play a dominant role in the southern and northern regions, respectively, the Tumakuru Lok Sabha constituency is considered unique as both communities have considerable vote share that determine the electoral outcome.

The constituency is also unique since all three parties – Congress, BJP, and Janata Dal (Secular) – have a strong base and electoral battles are intensely fought. The former Minister V. Somanna, a Lingayat, who replaced incumbent four-time MP G.S. Basavaraju, is pitted against the former MP S.P. Muddahanume Gowda, a Vokkaliga, of the Congress in the constituency that will go to the polls on April 26. Mr. Gowda, who was asked to vacate his seat in favour of the former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda in 2019, was miffed and joined the BJP in 2022 only to return to the Congress recently.

In the constituency, while the BJP is publicising Prime Minister Narendra Modi's contribution, the Congress has countered it through its "guarantees", besides raising the Centre-State issues over drought relief and tax sharing.

The Tumakuru's political landscape has altered a bit over the past year with three-time JD(S) legislator for Gubbi S.R. Srinivas joining the Congress to win his fifth term and two-time legislator for Tumakuru Rural and Madhugiri D.C. Gowrishankar also joining the Congress.

Post the JD(S) allying with the BJP, several Congress mid-level Muslim leaders have also moved to the Congress. Similarly, the former Congress MLA H. Ningappa has joined the JD (S). The BJP has trouble too since the former Minister J.C. Madhuswamy, angry at being denied the ticket, is learnt to have stayed away from campaigning.

Of the eight Assembly constituencies, the Congress represents four while the BJP and the JD(S) have two each. Two prominent Cabinet Ministers G. Parameshwara and K.N. Rajanna are from Tumakuru.

JD(S) workers, who worked with Congress workers to campaign for Mr. Deve Gowda in the last election, who eventually lost to Mr. Basavaraju by a narrow margin, are now forced to coordinate with the BJP. "Though there were initial misgivings, we have started campaigning together," said Chinne Gowda, a JD(S) worker in Turuvekere.

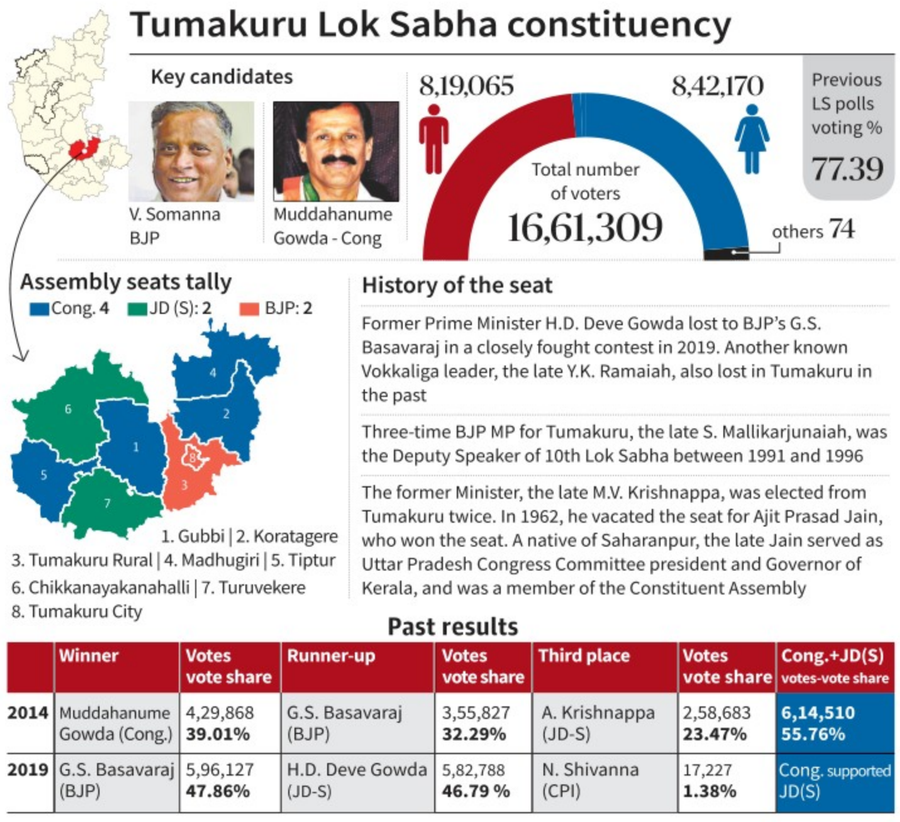
Contrasting opinions

The constituency is witnessing contrasting opinions of electors, with land-owning families and others dismissing the guarantees and pointing out at the increased prices of liquor and stamp paper. "To fund the guarantees, the government has made our lives expensive. Instead, it should have increased drought relief," said Jayanna of Belgarahalli in Tiptur. However, Parashuram, a kitchen utensils vendor in Tiptur, said the guarantees had helped his family as there is some stable income, especially during the drought when his sales have come down. Raghu, an auto driver at Madhugiri, complained that his income had come down after Shakti scheme (free bus travel for women), but acknowledged that his wife was receiving the ₹2,000 a month under Gruhalakshmi besides free power under Gruhajyothi and money for free rice.

At K.B. Cross, women from economically weaker sections expressed happiness over the guarantees. "We don't need to go to moneylenders now. Women are now balancing the family expenditure better as we get about ₹3,000 a month additionally through guarantees," said Sowbhagya, who is in her 40s and sells clothes at a weekly market.

Besides Vokkaligas and Veerashaiva-Lingayats, Muslims, Kurubas, Gollas, Tigulas, and Kunchitigas appear to be politically important apart from the SCs and OBCs in Tumakuru.

The Congress believes that it can win the seat due to lack of coordination among BJP and JD(S) workers besides the reach of guarantees. Lokesh, a Congress worker at Koratagere, claimed, "The BJP won last time since many Congress workers voted for the party. This is not the case now."



Past results

	Winner	Votes vote share	Runner-up	Votes vote share	Third place	Votes vote share	Cong.+JD(S) votes-vote share
2014	Muddahanume Gowda (Cong.)	4,29,868 **39.01%**	G.S. Basavaraj (BJP)	3,55,827 **32.29%**	A. Krishnappa (JD-S)	2,58,683 **23.47%**	**6,14,510 55.76%**
2019	G.S. Basavaraj (BJP)	5,96,127 **47.86%**	H.D. Deve Gowda (JD-S)	5,82,788 **46.79 %**	N. Shivanna (CPI)	17,227 **1.38%**	Cong. supported JD(S)

JD(S)-BJP alliance will come to power in State once again: HDK

The Hindu Bureau
SHIVAMOGGA

Stating that the year 2024 will bring "a significant change" politically in Karnataka, the former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy has said the JD(S) and the BJP will again form a government as it was done in 2006.

He was addressing a rally held in Shivamoggga on Thursday, when BJP candidate B.Y. Raghavendra submitted his nomination papers for the Shivamogga Lok Sabha seat. "I seek your blessings in the current election, so that the year 2024 brings about a change and we form another government this year itself," he said.

Recalling the schemes such as Bhagyalakshmi launched during the coalition rule, Mr. Kumaraswamy said he could form the government because of BJP veteran B.S. Yediyurappa's support.

"I wanted to hand over the charge after my term. However, due to the interference of some mediators, it did not happen," he said.

Mr. Yediyurappa exuded confidence that his son Mr. Raghavendra would win the election by a margin not less than three lakh votes.

How the famed Hoysala temples became UNESCO World Heritage Sites

Meera Iyer, convener of the Bengaluru chapter of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage, explains how the Hoysala temples at Belur, Halebid, and Somanathapur got recognition by UNESCO

Preeti Zachariah
BENGALURU

The 12th century Saumyakeshava temple at Nagamangala in Mandya district built with granite and soapstone is a Hoysala monument which was renovated by successive rulers and also displays Vijayanagar and post-Vijayanagar features. R. KRISHNA KUMAR

Meera Iyer .

A view of Hoysala architecture wall sculpture at Arsikere.

There is a popular myth about the Hoysala dynasty, a story so deeply entrenched in folklore that it inspired the emblem of this medieval South Indian empire.

This is how the story goes: the person believed to have founded the Hoysala dynasty, Sala, was travelling with his guru, Sudatta, through a forest when they encountered a tiger. Sudatta is believed to have shouted, "Hoy (which means strike in Haleganna-da), Sala," which Sala promptly did, killing the tiger. Later, when he founded his kingdom, he remembered the cry of his teacher and named this kingdom after it.

"You would have seen this story portrayed in many temples," says Meera Iyer, the convener of the Bengaluru chapter of the Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), at a recent event at The Bangalore Room, Indiranagar. Since the Chola Dynasty's flag bore the image of a leaping tiger, the story could also be a metaphor for the Hoysala victory over them in 1116 CE at Talakadu.

As Iyer also points out in the talk titled *How Belur and Halebid Won the World HeritageTag*, this story gained popularity only around the time of the Hoysala king, Vishnuvardhana, who ruled the region between 1108 and 1152 CE.

Over an hour-long lecture, peppered with delightful little nuggets of information such as this one, she offered many insights into the legacy of this ancient kingdom. She also spoke about how the Hoysala temples at Belur, Halebid, and Somanathapur became UNESCO World Heritage Sites in September last year. "This was a really exciting moment for all of us," admits Iyer, who was part of the team that worked on the nomination dossier for submission to UNESCO

Who were the Hoysalas?

The Hoysala Kingdom was a Kannada-speaking empire that mushroomed across Karnataka between the 11th and the 14th century. While the early history of the Hoysalas is not well-documented, they are believed to have come from the Malnad region of the Western Ghats.

The Hoysalas were initially the vassals of the Kalyani Chalukyas, eventually breaking away from them and emerging as an independent state by the 12th century. Iyer lists the names of some of its best-known rulers, Nripa Kama II, Vishnuvardhana, Veera Ballala II, and Veera Ballala III, and mentions a significant event that took place in the time of Vishnuvardhana: the coming of the philosopher-saint Ramanuja to Hoysala territory. "He was known for propagating Sri Vaishnavism, a form of Vaishnavism," says Iyer of Ramanuja, who is believed to have fled from the Chola society that he was born in to escape the wrath of a king who was a staunch Shaivite.

Vishnuvardhana is believed to have a sick daughter, and though he had taken her to many physicians, it was Ramanuja who cured her. "(It is said that) he was influenced by this and converted to Sri Vaishnavism (from Jainism)," says Iyer. "Whether he did or not is a bit debatable, but you do see a strong influence of Ramanuja in Hoysala society." While Vishnuvardhana had always sought to create an independent empire, he did not completely succeed. "That didn't happen till the time of his grandson, Veera Ballala II (1173-1220)," says Iyer. Over the next century or so, the Hoysalas continued to expand their empire, even venturing into modern-day Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh, before the last great king of the dynasty, Veera Ballala III, was captured during the Battle of Kannanur and subsequently put to death in 1342.

The 13th century Keshava temple at Somanathpur, near Mysuru, was built by the Hoysalas. FILE PHOTO

A lasting legacy

One of the most profound contributions of the Hoysala Dynasty is the vast number of stunning temples built across their kingdom, both large and small, offering a glimpse into the period's rich architectural tradition. "There are believed to have been several hundred temples," says Iyer. Even today there are over a hundred remaining in various stages of preservation. "Some of them are protected by the Archaeological Survey of India, some by the Karnataka State and some of them are unprotected," says Iyer.

She also explains what makes these temples special. The obvious reason is that they are aesthetically very appealing, with their diverse plans (especially the iconic stellate one), detailed architecture and ornate walls and pillars. "You can't see the walls in a sense because the entire wall is a canvas," she says, adding that interestingly, the temples were built by all kinds of people, not just royalty. Also, "there was this idea of syncretism," she says, as evidenced by the fact that the same town would often contain Vishnu, Shiva and Jain temples. Another fascinating fact is the idea of artistic agency, with many sculptures inscribed with the names or initials of the people who created them, sometimes even their family trees and origins. "We have the names of almost 200 artisans. This is quite phenomenal," says Iyer. She also goes into the architectural eclecticism of the Hoysala temples, the idea that--like all creative things--they did not come up in a vacuum, and drew from many other architectural styles.

For instance, the shikhara that was once part of the Channakeshava Temple in Belur (it was taken down in the 1800s) closely resembles the Bhumija shikhara often seen in the Malwa region of central India while influences of Western or Kalyani Chalukya architecture can be discerned in many of the Hoysala temples, too. While the Chalukyas before them had also been making ornate, beautiful structures out of schist or soapstone, "the Hoysalas took some of these designs from the Chalukyas and extrapolated it to a different scale altogether," she says.

Becoming a World Heritage Site

According to the UNESCO website, as of January 2024, there are around 1,199 World Heritage Sites, 42 of which are in India. "This is the term that follows from a convention that happened in 1972. And from the 1980s, UNESCO started awarding certain sites this term," says Iyer. While Karnataka's Hampi and Pattadakal made it to the list back then, the Hoysala temples were not considered for a long time. "We had this entire list of World Heritage sites but not a single Hoysala monument. That was always a shock for anyone who has seen them," she says.

So, what exactly is a World Heritage Site? "Sites determined to be important not just for the city or the country but for all of humanity," says Iyer. For a site to be considered, it needs to have 'Outstanding Universal Value'. "The whole nomination hinges on this, in fact," she adds.

UNESCO states that the site in question needs to meet one or more of 10 criteria, which include representing a masterpiece of human creative genius, exhibiting an important interchange of human values, bearing exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition and illustrating a significant stage in human history, among other things. Additionally, it needs to meet conditions of integrity and authenticity and have an adequate system of protection and management to safeguard its future.

How shortlisting works

At the talk, Iyer also went into the application process and how the INTACH team shortlisted the temples: the Chennakeshava Temple in Belur, the Hoysaleswara Temple in Halebid and the Keshava Temple in Somanathapura. They worked with a huge team of experts, including historians, art historians, architects, geologists, dancers and sculptors, "to understand how these cultures were made," she states. "There were a lot of visits, documentation of the temples and speaking with several people."

Finally, in September last year, nearly a decade after the government put the Hoysala Temples on the tentative list in 2014, 'The Sacred Ensembles of Hoysalas' became the 42nd UNESCO World Heritage Site in India "This is the culmination of an extremely long journey," says Iyer.

Bengaluru based start-up successfully completes aerial testing

Testing data captured in the U.K. and processed at HQ in Bengaluru.

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

KaleidEO Space Systems, a start-up based out of Bengaluru and a subsidiary company of SatSure Analytics India Pvt Ltd, announced the successful aerial testing of its high-performance optical and multi-spectral earth observation payload.

According to the release, this milestone makes KaleidEO one of the first private Indian companies to design & develop a high-resolution optical EO payload.

The successful prototype test, conducted aboard an aircraft over the U.K. and Austria (in collaboration with the Global Assistant & Logistic Group), was aimed to assess the functionality and stability of the payload in the real-world environment. This milestone makes KaleidEO and SatSure combined, a full stack earth observation company, the likes of which are very few globally.

While earlier, the team was evaluating to test the payload on a satellite demonstrator, they pivoted to high-quality aircraft testing as a more time and cost-effective option. With this milestone, KaleidEO is on track to unveil a full-fledged commercial version of the payload, poised for deployment on satellites.

This advanced piece of technology will be integrated into a fleet of four satellites orbiting at a very low earth orbit of 380 k.m.

Five social enterprises bag ₹45 lakh in funding at SBI Youth for India Conclave

The Youth for India Conclave served as a platform for social sector organisations for dialogue, networking and possible collaborations in the rural development sector

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

SBI Foundation, the CSR arm of the State Bank group recently hosted the two-day SBI Youth for India Conclave in Bengaluru, offering a dynamic platform to social entrepreneurs and trailblazers from the social sector.

The event, held in Bengaluru witnessed the convergence of social entrepreneurs, academia, civil society representatives, and alumni of the SBI Youth for India (YFI) Programme. The Youth for India Conclave served as a platform for social sector organisations for dialogue, networking and possible collaborations in the rural development sector.

The Sahyog winners. (From left) Shraddha Gosavi, Nishant Kr. Singh, Jagannath Sahoo, Sanjay Prakash, Ashwini Laxman Shelke, Gayathri Swahar, Gyan Prakash, Nupur Poharkar, and Steward Gracian.

The pitch fest

The conclave featured an array of interactive sessions, including advisory forums, speed networking, boot camps, YFI Sahyog-The Pitch Fest, and formal and informal discussions, fostering collaboration and knowledge exchange among non-profits, think tanks, YFI Fellows, and other stakeholders from across the country.

The Sahyog winners

According to the release, YFI Conclave, 'SBI YFI Sahyog - The Pitch Fest' saw 9 social enterprises compete for funding, where 5 winners were granted seed funding of ₹45 lakh. The initiative aims to provide seed funding to promising non-profit and for-profit ventures led by SBI YFI alumni, facilitating their continued efforts towards social impact and community development.

The selection process

The selection process for the winning ventures involved assessment and evaluation conducted by a jury comprising Sanjay Prakash (MD & CEO, SBI Foundation), Jagannath Sahoo (President & COO, SBI Foundation), Gayathri Swahar, Senior Director, Social Entrepreneurship at The/Nudge Institute and Co-founder of Ycook India, Suresh Krishna Bandi, Associate Vice President-Programs & Partnerships, I-Ventures@ ISB, Hyderabad, and Gyan Prakash Program Head, SBI Youth For India Fellowship.

Social impact projects

Sanjay Prakash, Managing Director & CEO of SBI Foundation, said, "Through initiatives like the Youth for India Fellowship, we have witnessed firsthand how our young Fellows have harnessed their potential to initiate tangible social impact projects in rural communities."

"Having impacted 1,50,000+ lives in 250+ villages across the length and breadth of the country, we take pride in nurturing social entrepreneurship and contributing to India's national priorities around rural development," he further added.

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO APRIL 19, 1974

More Assembly Seats for Karnataka

Bangalore, April 18: The total number of seats in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly has been increased from 216 to 224 and the State will have 28 Lok Sabha seats as against 27 at present.

The decision has been taken by the Delimitation Commission of India on the basis of the latest census figures and having regard to the provisions of Article 81, 170, 330 and 332 of the Indian Constitution.

Of the 224 Assembly seats, 29 seats will be reserved for the Scheduled Castes and 2 for the Scheduled Tribes. Four out of the 28 Lok Sabha seats will be reserved for the Scheduled Castes. In Bangalore, four more Assembly constituencies have been created and they are Rajajingar, Binnypet, Jayanagar and Jayamahal.

Dog to Master's Rescue in Cheetah Fight

Hassan, April 18: Janardhan, a 25-year-old farmer, has been admitted to the Government hospital here with severe injuries sustained by him while fighting a cheetah yesterday near his farm. He finally killed the wild animal with a lathi.

It was stated that while fighting with the cheetah he was injured and immobilised for some time. His dog, however, lost no time in pouncing on the beast and kept it engaged. Meanwhile, the farmer got up and dealt a death blow to the cheetah, hitting it right on the head with a stick. The villagers later arrived on the scene and took the injured farmer to hospital. The farmer is now out of danger.

Karnataka InFocus

THE HINDU

NUGGETS OF HISTORY

Playfields notified in Mangaluru

The football and cricket grounds at the Nehru Maidan in the heart of Mangaluru are notified spaces. While the cricket ground of more than 6 acres is also used for non-sporting events, the football ground of three acres is used for only sports events. These two and the adjoining Hockey ground, now used as bus terminus, were donated by a philanthropist.

Synthetic track and need for its upkeep

The Mangala Stadium in Mangaluru has been the place where majority of the athletes from Dakshina Kannada practice. In 2013 synthetic track was laid and Federation Cup National Senior Athletics Championship was held at the stadium in 2015. Athletes, who are concerned over flattening of synthetic tracks, have been demanding its replacement.

Three competition level pools

With the new Yemmekere international level swimming pool opening recently, Mangaluru City now has three competition-level pools. The Mangala swimming pool of Mangaluru City Corporation is the old one and the other is the St. Aloysius Swimming pool. There is a competition level swimming pool of the Government in Moodbidri, Puttur, Karkala.

Badminton courts in Mangaluru

The oldest badminton court is the U.S. Mallya Indoor Stadium, adjoining the Mangala Stadium. Badmintion courts are also at Father Muller Indoor Stadium, KMC's Marena Indoor Stadium and at Yendurance Zone Indoor Stadium. Good number of new wooden floor badminton courts have come up in areas like Kadri, Falnir, Kottara Chowki and Surathkal.

Skating for specially abled children too

The oldest skating rink in Mangaluru city is near the Mangaluru City Corporation, where, among others, specially abled children come for training. A skating rink has also come up on the land of Horticulture Department, off the National Highway 66.
A private organisation has also opened a skating rink in Ashok Nagar.

Covering long distances for great company and better health

Mangaluru Runners Club, a diverse community of runners was brought together by their shared passion for running and commitment to living a healthy and active lifestyle

Raghava M.
MANGALURU

A few minutes before the sun rose on the day of Bisu Parba, the festival in Tulunadu to mark the first day of Souramana Ugadi, on April 14, around 50 runners assembled behind Bharat Mall in Mangaluru. After about 10 minutes of warm-up, the runners started their regular 5K and 10K "Sunday run" at 5.50 a.m.

They ran the initial 2.5 k.m. together, which covered a major part of the route that Prime Minister Narendra Modi took later in the day as part of his roadshow in the run-up to the second phase of polling to Lok Sabha elections on April 26. The 5k runners took a u-turn at the Babasaheb Ambedkar (Jyothi) Circle to return to the start point. The 10k runners continued to cover Bendoorwell, St. Agnes College, Nantoor, KPT, Kuntikana and reach the start point by 7.15 a.m.

A week ago, nearly 60 runners turned up for the "Sunday run" at the pristine Chitrapura beach at 6 a.m.. With the waves gently lapping at the shore, most of the runners ran barefoot for their 5 km run on the beach. Following the run, they did a cool down and stretching routine led by veteran runner Mehwish Hussain, which was followed by "animal flow" workout by runner and fitness trainer Nayana Shetty.

These "Sunday runs" are among the activities conducted by Mangaluru Runners Club (MRC), a diverse community of runners brought together by their shared passion for running and commitment to living a healthy and active lifestyle.

The members of Mangalore Runners Club at a morning run session, in Mangaluru. H.S. MANJUNATH

Runners recently took part in the 5K Sunday Run on Chitrapura beach in Mangaluru. H.S. MANJUNATH

Starting small

Abhilash Dominic, a software professional and old member of MRC, said the club started as an informal group of about six passionate runners. "All our focus was on participating in marathons held across the country. We participated in several runs across the country and we continue to do so," he said. As members started to increase, weekend runs started, which was followed with monthly "Run clinics" focused on strengthening routine and other aspects of long distance running.

It was in 2022 that MRC was registered and the first Mangalore Marathon was held. The second edition of Mangalore Marathon was in November last year. Mr. Dominic was the race director for the first two editions and is the director again for the third edition scheduled on November 10. "The club members take active part in holding and participating in the runs and also other fitness activities of the district administration, police and educational institutions," said another passionate runner Amitha D'Souza, the President of MRC.

A diverse group

It's drive to maintain physical fitness that has made people from diverse professions, including doctors, engineers, investment bankers, businessmen, teacher and government officials, to start running in the city.

Ms. D'Souza, an investment banker, said she started running with an intention of losing weight after childbirth. "I joined this passionate group of runners and since then it has been a fascinating running journey," she said. Plastic surgeon Maya Natarajan picked up running during Covid in 2020. "I make it a point to maintain my own pace and complete the run," said Dr. Natarajan, who is a regular participant in "Sunday runs."

Teacher Anjana Kamat said she started running four years ago along her husband Amar, a businessman. "Running was one activity by which we could spend time together. Regardless of the time taken for work and socialising on Saturday, we make it a point to be at the start point of the Sunday runs by 5.30 a.m. Sunday runs helps in meet people from diverse professions," she said.

Across the country

Finance firm employee Shiva Kumar and Marketing professional Ms. Hussain are among the runners from the city who have been regular in marathons held across the country. "It's just the craze for running that made me take up this activity in October, 2018. I won my first medal in 10K run in November 2018 and since then I have been participating in different runs," said Mr. Kumar. Recently he and fellow MRC member Aparna Nayak, an ophthalmologist, took part in the "Ootyultra", a run with steep up/down gradients through the streets and wooded forest area of Ooty. Mr. Kumar, who has participated in the challenging Ladak Marathon, is aiming to take part in enduring Boston Marathon.

Ms. Hussain, a strength and conditioning instructor, has participated in Mumbai Marathon, Bangalore Marathon, Manipal Marathon, Hyderabad Marathon, Dandeli Ultra (75-kms), Coorg Ultra (50-kms) and Chickmanguluru Run, and had podium finishes.

It is this performance that has been taken into consideration for her to act as "pacer" in three recent marathons, including the TCS Mumbai Marathon.

Among the other passionate runners of the city are Chandrashekar Shetty, an official from the engineering division of All India Radio Mangaluru, and Ritesh Shetty, an official in a private bank. Mr. Chandrashekar and Mr. Ritesh are captains of Fitistan - a community driven initiative to inspire, educate and facilitate a physically and mentally fitter lifestyle for countrymen.

Royster D'Souza, Vasudev Kamath and Vishwanath Kotian are among the few runners in the city who run barefoot. For dermatologist Vijetha Rai and radiologist Santosh Rai, running is the physical activity in addition to regular swimming.

Officials like Praveen Badiger from Mangaluru District Prison ran for several weeks in Mangaluru. Following his recent transfer to Dharward Central Prison, Mr. Badiger has continued his running by associating with the running community in Dharwad. Similarly, Inspector General of Police Sandeep Patil, who was the Mangaluru Police Commissioner, and Haveri Zilla Panchayat Chief Executive Officer Akshay Sridhar, the former Mangaluru City Corporation, have continued running following their transfer from Mangaluru. Managing Director of Government Tool Room and Training Centre, Y.K. Dinesh Kumar, the former Deputy Conservator of Forests of Dakshina Kannada, is a regular participant in the marathons held in Mangaluru.

Lalit, an official from the Mangaluru International Airport, has been taking part in the running events in the city for the last eight years. Fitness enthusiast and surgeon H.M. Shamanth and former middle distance runner Nigel Monterio have recently started taking part in running events of MRC.

Good number of runners from the city and other parts of the country are likely to take part in the third edition of Mangalore Marathon on November 10.

Labourer who threw stone at Jagan booked for attempt to murder

The Hindu Bureau
VIJAYAWADA

The NTR Commissionerate police on Thursday arrested a daily wage labourer who allegedly hurled a stone at Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy.

The police are trying to find out whether any other person was involved in the incident.

A resident of Vaddera Colony, the labourer, Vemula Satish, hurled the stone at the Chief Minister while he was participating in a 'Memantha Siddham' election campaign in Ajitsingh Nagar on April 13.

Mr. Reddy and former Minister and MLA Vellampalli Srinivas suffered injuries in the attack. The Chief Minister was seen with a bleeding injury on his forehead after the incident. Both he and Mr. Srinivas underwent treatment at Government General Hospital, Vijayawada, on the same night.

Based on the complaint lodged by the MLA, the Ajitsingh Nagar police registered a case under Section 307 of the IPC (attempt to murder) and took up the investigation.

The police, who questioned about 70 suspects in the case, zeroed in on Satish and arrested him.

"The accused who attacked the Chief Minister has been arrested. We will produce him in court. We are trying to find out the motive behind the attack," the police said.

Reports of EVM error during mock poll in Kerala are false, EC tells SC

SC Bench says petitioners have gone solely by media reports and have not verified the issue personally; Kerala Chief Electoral Officer says misunderstanding was caused by an additional slip released by VVPAT machine during the mock poll

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Election Commission of India (EC) on Thursday told the Supreme Court that statements about four electronic voting machines (EVMs) erroneously logged in votes in favour of the BJP during mock polls held in Kerala were plainly false.

The attention of a Bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta was drawn to the reports by advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for petitioner Association for Democratic Reforms. Mr. Bhushan said the four EVMs had reportedly malfunctioned in the mock polls held in Kasaragod district of Kerala on April 17.

The Bench had asked senior advocate Maninder Singh, appearing for the EC, to "check it up".

Clearing the air: Election officials checking the electronic voting machines. REUTERS

When the court re-assembled at 2 p.m., a senior EC official, Nitesh Kumar Vyas, informed the court that the "news reports were false".

"We have verified the allegation from the District Collector and it appears that they are false. We will submit a detailed report to the court," he submitted.

Senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, appearing for another petitioner, Arun Kumar Agarwal, said they had merely alerted the court to the media reports. Their intentions were not adversarial.

Justice Khanna said the petitioners had gone solely by the media reports and had not verified the issue personally.

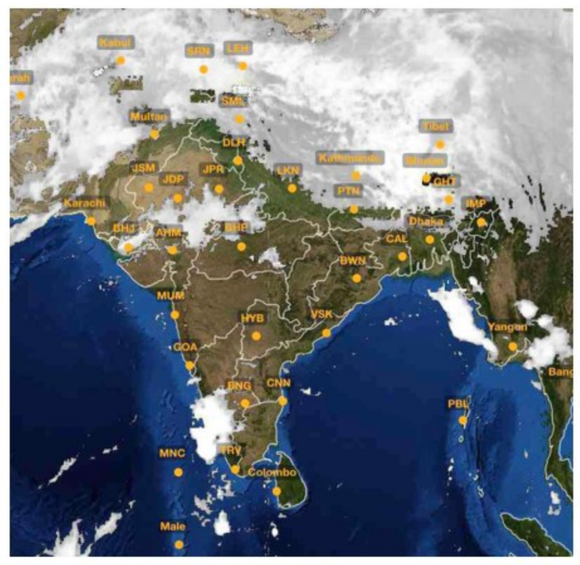
The Bench is hearing petitions seeking 100% cross-verification of EVM votes with Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) slips. The petitioners, including Association for Democratic Reforms, have urged the court to allow voters physical access to the VVPAT slips to confirm the votes they have cast before putting the slips into the sealed ballot boxes. They have contended that the voters have a fundamental right to be confident about the accuracy of the votes they have cast.

The petitioners have voiced their apprehensions that EVMs could malfunction or malicious software could be uploaded, favouring the registration of votes in favour of a party, possibly the ruling one.

Meanwhile, Chief Electoral Officer (Kerala) Sanjay Kaul has termed baseless the complaint that EVMs had registered extra votes for the BJP. According to him, the "misunderstanding" was caused by an additional slip released by the VVPAT machine during the mock poll. This slip is longer than the normal VVPAT slips and is used for an initial inspection ahead of the mock poll, he said. The VVPAT slip that was not printed during this initial examination had been released during the mock poll. It had 'Not to be counted' mentioned on it, in addition to 'Standardisation done' and VVPAT serial number.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Friday: Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, south interior Karnataka, Kerala and Mahe. Heat wave likely to prevail in isolated pockets over Jharkhand, Telangana, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Yanam, Rayalaseema, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	31	35.4	22.2	Kozhikode	—	36.5	28.5
Ahmedabad	—	41.6	29.0	Kurnool	—	44.0	32.0
Aizawl	53	34.0	19.3	Lucknow	—	39.9	22.6
Allahabad	—	42.2	22.6	Madurai	—	39.6	26.7
Bengaluru	—	37.2	24.4	Mangaluru	—	35.5	26.2
Bhopal	—	39.7	24.0	Mumbai	—	34.4	27.6
Bhubaneswar	—	43.6	27.0	Mysuru	—	37.5	21.0
Chandigarh	—	36.7	21.8	New Delhi	—	39.2	20.9
Chennai	—	38.7	26.9	Patna	—	39.4	25.0
Coimbatore	—	37.8	26.0	Port Blair	—	34.6	26.0
Dehradun	—	36.5	18.4	Puducherry	—	36.0	27.8
Gangtok	43	17.2	14.7	Pune	4.2	41.0	24.1
Goa	—	33.4	26.8	Raipur	—	40.7	26.2
Guwahati	—	32.2	22.2	Ranchi	—	36.2	23.6
Hubballi	—	37.0	24.0	Shillong	—	25.7	15.8
Hyderabad	0.1	40.8	27.7	Shimla	—	27.0	15.0
Imphal	4	33.2	17.1	Srinagar	—	17.7	12.5
Jaipur	—	39.4	24.0	Thiruvananthapuram	—	34.4	28.1
Kochi	0.6	33.4	27.8	Tiruchi	—	40.9	27.4
Kohima	4	26.8	14.5	Vijayawada	—	40.4	27.6
Kolkata	—	39.6	29.2	Visakhapatnam	—	34.4	28.6

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.12	.45	.92	109	95	
Bengaluru	9	17	.34	210	182	
Chennai	6	9	.73	51	51	
Delhi	.21	108	.36	82	228	
Hyderabad	.38	.40	.22	88	110	
Kolkata	.13	6	.72	70	103	
Lucknow	.11	.10	.45	217	141	
Mumbai	.13	.22	.36	113	178	
Pune	106	149	116	42	42	
Visakhapatnam	.13	.51	.35	63	111	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Sri Ganganagar, Rajasthan recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 287 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Puducherry recorded a healthy AQI score of 24

Air Quality Code: Poor | Moderate | Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Rahul asks why no action taken against Pinarayi

The Hindu Bureau
KANNUR

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has expressed astonishment at the BJP and Central agencies for allegedly targeting him while ignoring "serious allegations" against Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.

Speaking at a public meeting organised by the United Democratic Front in Kannur as part of the Lok Sabha election campaign on Thursday, Mr. Gandhi recounted his own experiences of facing backlash for opposing the BJP, including "being subjected to media abuse, losing his Lok Sabha membership, enduring 55 hours of interrogation by the ED, and being evicted from his official residence."

Mr. Gandhi asked why Mr. Vijayan has not faced similar consequences despite corruption allegations and other issues. He highlighted the "imprisonment of two Chief Ministers"

Rahul Gandhi

from other States, contrasting it with Mr. Vijayan's immunity.

Mr. Gandhi suggested that while he has been vigorously opposing the BJP, Mr. Vijayan seems to be "untouched" by Central agencies, despite his claims of fighting an ideological battle against the BJP. Asserting the importance of Constitutional institutions such as the Election Commission, the judiciary, investigative agencies such as the ED and the CBI in "safeguarding democracy", Mr. Gandhi accused the BJP of weaponising these institutions for political gains.

He criticised the BJP's attempts to impose "a singular history, language, and ideology on the diverse nation of India," which, he argued, undermines its essence and creates disharmony.

Wild tusker captured at Vatehalli in Belur taluk of Hassan district

The Hindu Bureau
SHIVAMOGGA

The Karnataka Forest Department officials, with the help of a team of tamed elephants, captured a wild tusker, which had been causing trouble to local people in a coffee estate at Vatehalli near Arehalli in Belur taluk of Hassan district on Thursday.

The department succeeded in capturing the elephant, which has been identified by the locals as Karadi, as soon as they began the operation that day. A team of guards and watchers tracked the animal, and it was sedated by firing a tranquilliser dart.

The wild tusker had been roaming the villages of Belur and Sakleshpur taluks. Recently, it was spotted fighting with another tusker in the residential locality of Hullenahalli in Belur taluk.

Death of farmhand

The locals had put pressure on the Forest Department to capture it.

The animal, it is said, was responsible for the death of an agricultural labourer at Mattavara in Belur taluk on January 4.

Tamed elephants Abhimanyu, Karnataka Bhima, Harsha, Prashantha, Sugreeva, Dhananjaya, Ashwathama, and Mahindra were involved in the exercise.

The officials have said the captured elephant will be shifted to Dubare elephant camp.

Operation to continue

The operation to capture a few other rogue elephants will continue in Hassan district. The department has sought the cooperation of the farmers and local people during the operation.

Sourabh Kumar, Deputy Conservator of Forests, Hassan, told the media that the tusker, aged between 40 and 45, was identified for capture as there were incidents of the animal damaging crops and attacking human beings. It was captured at the IBC Estate of Vatehalli village in Belur taluk.

The operation was carried out as per the guidance of Subhash K. Malkade, PCCF (Wildlife), Kumar Pushkar, APPCF (Wildlife), and Manoj R. APPCF (Elephant Project).

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY
TENDER NOTICE No. 14/2024 Dated : 12-04-2024
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tenders for the supply of following item.

Tender No.	Description in Brief	Qty.
L8245487	Main Transformer 7775 KVA Type Lot 7500 for WAP7 3-Phase Electric Locomotive for HOG Compliance to CLW Specn. No. CLW/ES/3/0660 (ALT D) and STR No CLW/C-D&D/STR/001 REV"0" issued in Nov 2015.	04 Nos

Last date for submission of bids: **Upto 10:30 Hrs on 06-05-2024**
For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in
PUB/20/AAS/PRB/SWR/2024-25 **Senior Divisional Materials Manager, Bengaluru**
South Western Railway - SWR | southwesternrailway_swr | SWRRLY | southwesternrailway | SWRRLY

NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY
शुद्धि-पत्र
इस कार्यालय द्वारा ज्ञापित खुली **निविदा सूचना संख्या: जीएसयू/सीपीएम/जेपी/निविदा/** 23-24 **दिनांक 05.04.2024** में **निविदा सं. गति-शक्ति/इन्जी./जय/2023-24/18 आर 1 जो दिनांक 09.05.2024 को खोली जानी थी।** उक्त निविदा की प्रीबिड मिटींग के रिमार्कस वेबसाइट **www.ireps.gov.in** पर उपलब्ध कर दिये गये है कृपया प्रीबिड मिटींग के रिमार्कस को मध्य नजर रखते हुये निविदा प्रस्तुत करे। यह अन्य शर्तें यथावत रहेगी।
उप.मुख्य इंजी. (जी.एस.यु.)
470-AC/24 **जयपुर**

PUBLIC NOTICE
My client is desirous of purchasing all that piece and parcel of immovable property more-fully described in the schedule hereunder (**"Schedule Property"**) from its present owner, **MRS. ANUPAMA GOWLI.** It is reported that the| owner has acquired the right, title and interest over the schedule property by virtue of the Deed of Absolute sale dated 29.08.1994 vide registered as document No-4736/1994-95, volume 863, pages 21 to 24, dated 17-11-1994 in the office of the Senior Sub Registrar, K.R. Puram, Bengaluru. Any person or persons asserting any charge, lien, right, title, agreement, interest or claim on the schedule property or any part thereof in any manner or having any claim against the schedule property or the documents thereof or against the owner or objection to such sale in favour of my client should lodge his/her/their/its objections or claims with supporting documents with the undersigned within **SEVEN DAYS (7 Days)** of the issuance of this Public Notice, after which period my client shall proceed with the purchase of the schedule property on the basis that there are no claims of whatsoever nature with regards to the schedule property.
SCHEDULE PROPERTY
All the piece and parcel of the immovable property bearing **No.149,** House List Katha No. 172, situated at **Rachenahalli Village, K R Puram Hobli, Bengaluru East Taluk** carved out in Sy.No 103/2, 103/3 and 103/5 in converted land vide Official Memorandum bearing No. ALN. SR (S)378/1991-92 dated 17.07.1992 issued by the Special Deputy Commissioner, Bengaluru District., now comes within the limits of BBMP, Bengaluru and assigned the Katha bearing No-172/149/149, Sl.No 3476 measuring East to West 40 feet and North to South 40 feet bounded on the **East By- PWD Road, West By- Site No.148, North By- Site No. 150 and South By- 30 feet road.**
H. B. CHANDRASHEKAR
H.B. LAW ASSOCIATES,
Advocate,
No-4/20, 1st B Main Road,1st 'N' Block, Rajajinagar, Bangalore-560 010

PUBLIC NOTICE
The General Public is informed that the following vehicles are in possession of TRIDENT having its Registered Office at No.1 Lower palace Orchards, Bangalore-560003. These cars have been in possession of Trident for a period ranging from 5 years to over 13 years. In spite of best efforts, including filing suit No. OS 7721/2022 (CCH 16 - City Civil & Sessions Judge, Bangalore) Trident is unable to contact the owners of the below listed vehicles to retrieve these vehicles which were given for servicing. In case the owners of the vehicles in the list below or any other person who has an interest over the said vehicles do not claim the vehicles with documentary proof of ownership or interest within a period of fourteen (14) days from today (Contact numbers - 9036283983 / 9844266889). Trident will be constrained to dispose off these cars in whichever way it deems fit which may include a sale as scrap. If no claims, supported by documentary evidence of ownership, are received within the stipulated time, Trident shall not be liable or be held responsible for any loss or damages suffered by such vehicle owners or any other person with interest due to the disposal of these cars by Trident.

SL NO	CUSTOMER NAME	REG NO	MODEL	LYING WITH TRIDENT SINCE
1	Venugopal / Sailaja J	AP31AT6966	VERNA	11.02.2011
2	Suresh Kumar	KA05MH1700	SANTRO	08.03.2011
3	Mathangi Sunil Kumar	KA01MH3939	VECTRA	20.04.2012
4	Lokesh	KA01ME2994	OPTRA	01.05.2012
5	Akash S Mayur	KA01MD6756	I10	06.08.2012
6	Bhuvaneshwari	KA04P8922	ACCENT	15.03.2013
7	Ravi Kumar S/o Boregowda	KA04ML1345	NEW VERNA	16.07.2013
8	Lalit Kumar	KA01MA9076	OPTRA	07.10.2013
9	Venugopal Reddy	KA03MH0898	GETZ	18.03.2014
10	Sridhar G	KA04MF2565	i10	06.05.2014
11	Vikram	MP23LA2822	SANTRO	03.07.2014
12	Kishore	KA01MG1812	I20	01.08.2014
13	Jagjeet Marketing & Services P Ltd	KA03MD5921	ELANTRA	03.08.2014
14	Mr. Umashankar M	KA04MH1358	BEAT	12.08.2014
15	Muneer Ahmed	KA04Z1306	SANTRO	08.09.2014
16	Mahesh Kumar Sahu	KA03MA2539	ACCENT	10.11.2014
17	Nandeesh	KA17N9207	I20	07.01.2015
18	Mr. Malay Kumar Mohanty	KA05ML4629	BEAT	10.04.2015
19	Madhav Rao	MH01X8858	PULSE	09.06.2015
20	Gayathri, J C R Drill Solutions Pvt Ltd	KA01MG8055	SANTRO	17.07.2015
21	Harikrishnan Jayanthi	AP09BP2798	ACCENT	30.07.2015
22	Mohan Kumar K R	KA05ME5861	VERNA	20.08.2015
23	Adding Value	KA51MF0088	i20	05.09.2015
24	Suresh Kumar R	KA03AC1622	SCALA	10.11.2015
25	Basavarajappa D M	KA28N7448	DUSTER	15.12.2015
26	Mrs. Veena K G	KA06N7697	ENJOY	29.02.2016
27	Sarojini Chhibber	KA50N1706	SANTRO	01.03.2016
28	Shafeeq UR Rahaman	KA41Z6910	DUSTER	04.06.2016
29	Shailaja M	KA50N3849	I-20 ASTA(D)	27.06.2016
30	Suran Singhat	TN20AE7090	SANTRO	25.07.2016
31	Mr. Deepak Kumar	UP78CU2165	BEAT	06.08.2016
32	Venkatapathi	KA05MG0023	SANTRO	24.09.2016
33	Kubera Kumar G	KA04ML7058	UVA DIESEL	05.01.2017
34	Bhaskar S	KA02MG4809	I10	17.01.2017
35	Hasanabba	KA19AA8109	BEAT WHITE	10.02.2017
36	Nidhi Nandan	KA53MC4054	Elite i20	07.03.2017
37	Manjula M	KA41M4744	VERNA	09.05.2017
38	M/s Sri Giri Travels Pvt Ltd	KA01AF1194	LODGY	09.05.2017
39	Praveen B C	KA01MG4326	BEAT(P) RED	29.06.2017
40	Padma M	KA03MP2160	FLUENCE	20.07.2017
41	M/s Sri Giri Travels Pvt Ltd	KA01AF1198	LODGY	25.07.2017
42	M/s Sri Giri Travels Pvt Ltd	KA01AF1192	LODGY	03.08.2017
43	Bhagya Lakshmi	KL01AU1555	OPTRA	05.08.2017
44	K R Dharmappa	KA01AF6444	Xcent (D)	13.09.2017
45	Yashashwini / Girish V V	MH46X129	i10	04.11.2017
43	Mathew C Vargehese	TN07AE2457	GETZ	27.12.2017
47	Anshuman Rout	UP16C3817	MATIZ	01.01.2018
48	Shekar P	KA03MN8024	I20	01.01.2019

PUBLIC NOTICE
We are in the process of conducting Title Due Diligence with respect to the immovable property morefully described in the Schedule hereunder which is owned by Shreno Limited (Formerly known as Alembic Glass Industries Limited), a company governed under the Companies Act, 2013 having its registered office at Alembic Road, Vadodara- 390003 and also having office at Near Ujjval World School, Whitefield (post), Bangalore-560 066 ('**Owner**').
If anybody has any charge, lien, interest, title or claim of any nature whatsoever either by way of sale, exchange, gift, mortgage, charge, trust, inheritance, bequest, possession, lease, lien or otherwise in respect of the Schedule Property, they should come forth with the copies of documents in support of such claim and produce the same to the undersigned within **10** days from the date of publication of this notice. In the event no such legally tenable claim is received, our client shall complete the title due diligence as if there are no claims, demands, right, title or interest of any other person to the Schedule Property.
SCHEDULE PROPERTY
All that pieces and parcels of the converted lands totally ad-measuring 37 Acres 10.52 Guntas (excluding 1 Acre 13 Guntas Kharab) situated at Pattanduru Agrahara Village, KR Pura 3 Hobli, Bangalore East Taluk, Bangalore District allotted with BBMP Khatha No. 364, the description of which is as follows:

Sl. Nos.	Survey Nos.	Extent		Boundaries			
		Acres	Guntas	East by	West by	North by	South by
1.	20	5	11.12	Land bearing Sy.No. 22 belonging to Shreno Ltd	Road	Village Boundary	Land bearing Sy.No. 21 belonging to Shreno Ltd.
2.	21	3	26.4	Land bearing Sy.No. 22 belonging to Shreno Ltd	Road	Land bearing Sy.No. 20 & 22 belonging to Shreno Ltd	Land bearing Sy. No. 28
3.	22	6	25	Land bearing Sy.No. 23 belonging to Shreno Ltd	Land bearing Sy.No. 20 & 21 belonging to Shreno Ltd	Village Boundary	Land bearing Sy.No. 21 & 28 belonging to Shreno Ltd;
4.	23	6	3	Land bearing Sy.No. 24 belonging to Shreno Ltd	Land bearing Sy.No. 22 belonging to Shreno Ltd	Village boundary	Land bearing Survey No.27
5.	24/1	2	24	Land bearing Survey Nos.24/2 and 24/3 belonging to Shreno Ltd	Land bearing Survey No.23 belonging to Shreno Ltd	Village Boundary	Land bearing Survey No.27
6.	24/2	1	6	Land bearing Sy.No. 25/1 belonging to Shreno Ltd;	Land bearing Sy.No. 24/1 belonging to Shreno Ltd	Village Boundary	Land bearing Sy.No. 24/3 belonging to Shreno Ltd
7.	24/3	1	27	Land bearing Survey No.25/1 and 25/2 belonging to Shreno Ltd	Land bearing Survey No.24/1 belonging to Shreno Ltd	Land bearing Survey No.24/2 belonging to Shreno Ltd	Land bearing Survey No.27
8.	25/1	1	22	Land bearing Survey No.25/3 belonging to Shreno Ltd	Land bearing Survey Nos.24/2 and 24/3 belonging to Shreno Ltd	Village Boundary	Land bearing Survey No.25/2 belonging to Shreno Ltd
9.	25/2	1	26	Land bearing Survey No.25/3 belonging to Shreno Ltd;	Land bearing Survey No. 24/3 belonging to Shreno Ltd;	Land bearing Survey No.25/1 belonging to Shreno Ltd;	Land bearing Survey No.27
10.	25/3	3	15	Land bearing Survey No.26 belonging to Shreno Ltd	Land bearing Survey Nos.25/1 and 25/2 belonging to Shreno Ltd	Village Boundary	Land bearing Survey Nos.26 belonging to Shreno Ltd
11.	26/1	3	25	Village Boundary	Land bearing Survey No.25/3 belonging to Shreno Ltd	Village Boundary	Survey Nos.26/2 and 26/3 belonging to Shreno Ltd

Date : 18.04.2024
Bangalore
Signed **Ajesh Kumar S.** & **Varun Pai,** Advocates
AKS Law Associates
#301, Sunrise Chambers, Ulsoor Road, Bengaluru 560042.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Notice is hereby given to the Public that Original Sale Deed dated 01.01.2001 registered as document No.8162/2000-01 of Book I in the office of the Sub-Registrar Bangalore South Taluk & Sale Deed dated 04.08.2005 registered as document No.7829/2005-06 of Book I in the office of the Sub-Registrar Bangalore in respect of Flat No.326, measuring 660 Sq.ft., Situated at **Kodichikkanahalli Village, Begur Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk** has been lost, All the persons are hereby informed not to deal or carry out any transaction with anyone on the basis of the said Documents. If anyone has already carried out or being carried out kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within **07 days** from this present.
Y. Sowmya Yadav, Advocate
Samvruddhi Legal, # 83, Ground Floor, 5th 'A' Cross, 21st Main, J.P. Nagar 2nd Phase, Bangalore-78. **M : 9916343921**

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY
Tender Notice No. CAO/CN/BNC/2/2024 Dated: 15.04.2024
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-tenders for the following work.

Name of Work	Appx. Value
Tumakuru-Rayadurg New line:- 1) Remodelling of Rayadurga yard - a) Construction of earthwork in Bank, Construction of Minor bridge, P.way work and Supply of Ballast etc., complete. b) Proposed Tower Wagon shed c) Proposed Track machine siding. 2) Proposed Ballast siding at Avuladatla and Proposed extension of track machine siding at Kalyandurg **(Tender Ref. No.: TK-RDG-95**	**Rs. 9,76,12,748/-**

Last date for submission of bids: **Up to 15:00 hrs. of 07.05.2024**
For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in
Deputy Chief Engineer / Construction Works / Bengaluru Cantonment
PUB/24/AAV/PRB/SWR/2024-25
South Western Railway-SWR | SWRRLY | SWRRLY

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, invites E-tenders for the following works:
Tender Notice No. E-GSU-ELE-2024-25-OT-1 Dated 11.04.2024

Name of Work	Approx. Value
Modernisation of Mandya and Channapatna station under Amrit Bharat Scheme - Provision of Substation.	**Rs. 2,37,65,212.94/-**

Last date for submission of bids: **Up to 11:00 hrs. of 03.05.2024**

Tender Notice No. E-GSU-ELE-2024-25-OT-2 Dated 12.04.2024

Name of Work	Approx. Value
Modernisation of Ramanagaram and Kengeri station under Amrit Bharat Scheme - Provision of Substation.	**Rs. 2,47,30,972.54/-**

Tender Notice No. E-GSU-ELE-2024-25-OT-3 Dated 12.04.2024

Name of Work	Approx. Value
Modernisation of Malleswaram and Tumakuru stations under Amrit Bharat Scheme - Provision of Substation.	**Rs. 2,58,95,646.30/-**

Tender Notice No. E-GSU-ELE-2024-25-OT-4 Dated 12.04.2024

Name of Work	Approx. Value
Modernisation of Hindupur and Dodballapur station under Amrit Bharat Scheme - Provision of Substation	**Rs. 2,47,30,972.54/-**

Tender Notice No. E-GSU-ELE-2024-25-OT-5 Dated 12.04.2024

Name of Work	Approx. Value
Modernisation of Krishnarajapuram and Whitefield station under Amrit Bharat Scheme - Provision of Substation	**Rs. 2,16,15,580.29/-**

Last date for submission of bids for above 4 tenders: **Up to 11:00 hrs. of 06.05.2024**
For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in
Deputy Chief Electrical Engineer / GSU Bengaluru
PUB/21/AAV/PRB/SWR/2024-25
South Western Railway-SWR | SWRRLY | SWRRLY

War of attrition

Despite military gains, solution to Maoist insurgency cannot rest on just violence

For a long-standing insurgency that peaked in the early to mid-2000s, the war against the Maoists has settled into some sort of pattern. Recently, the insurgents suffered a series of blows from paramilitary and police forces, which include the killing of at least 29 Maoists in the Bastar region in Chhattisgarh on Tuesday. Limited to the jungles of central India and in places of sparse tribal presence with a weaker presence of the developmental and welfare state relative to the rest of the country, the Maoists have been significantly diminished as a political-ideological force with few takers for their party's – the Communist Party of India (Maoist) – ideology or visions of an alternative state. What they have retained, however, is an ability to target security forces – evident in the killing of 22 paramilitary personnel in April 2021 and 10 jawans in April 2023. This has necessitated security forces to use unconventional military tactics and new combing routes to target the armed Maoist cadres. While these attacks weaken the military strength of the Maoists, they cannot cumulatively wipe out the threat of the insurgents as claimed by the Union government. This is because the Maoists are in difficult hilly terrain and have shown the ability to win over some discontented sections of the tribals, who are affected by the civil war.

After two decades of fighting the Maoists, whose strength peaked after two prominent Naxalite parties merged into the CPI (Maoist), the Indian state has long realised that the only way out is to take them on militarily while winning over tribals through welfare measures. In the late 2000s, the use of ploys such as arming tribals to take on the Maoists through flawed campaigns such as the Salwa Judum backfired. Later, in a change of tack, the reach of the welfare state and the bureaucracy gradually expanded into hitherto inaccessible areas in central India and helped negate Maoist propaganda about the Indian state being exploitative. Several tribal people, tired of the warfare and violence, refused to support the Maoists, leading to desertion in their ranks in other States as well. In Chhattisgarh, however, the constant warfare has helped the Maoists tap into some discontent. Civil society and peace activists have tried to initiate ceasefire talks between the Maoists and the security forces besides asking the insurgents to use democratic means to take up tribal causes. But the Maoists, despite setbacks, have refused to give up on their anachronistic ideology. Their unwillingness to accept that the poor tribals, whom they claim to represent, only want better engagement and outcomes from the welfare and electoral system, and not a violent overthrow that jeopardises their lives, has ensured that the war of attrition continues.

Pale green shoots

After a year of tepid demand and low prices, exports face fresh turbulence

India's merchandise exports hit a 12-month peak of $41.7 billion last month, marginally lower than March 2023 and a tad higher than February's $41.4 billion figure. Imports fell 6% to $57.3 billion, taking the trade deficit to an 11-month low. The last two months' robust export numbers bolstered the tally for outbound shipments from $354 billion at the end of January to $437.1 billion for the full year, just 3% short of the record $451 billion performance in 2022-23. Amid a decline in commodity prices, which averaged about 14% lower last year, this is a commendable outcome, aided by demand proving more resilient than earlier anticipated in major markets. That imports dipped at a higher 4.8% pace has also cushioned the trade deficit, and economists now expect the January-March quarter to end up with a small but rare current account surplus. Services trade data for the full year will be available later, but the Commerce Ministry estimates that total exports in 2023-24 were fractionally higher than the previous year at $776.7 billion.

Trade mandarins believe goods exports have entered a positive growth cycle, having coped with persistent strife – from Ukraine to Palestine and the Red Sea. Last week, the World Trade Organization (WTO) downgraded its global trade volume growth projection to 2.6% from 3.3% reckoned earlier, with risks tilted towards the downside. This is despite favourable base effects from its revision for 2023 trade volumes, which the WTO says tanked 1.2% compared with a 0.8% dip expected earlier. Export volumes from Asia are expected to rise 3.4% in 2024, with imports climbing 5.6%. In India, a healthy monsoon is expected to spur domestic demand, including for discretionary imports. But sustained disruptions on two of the world's key shipping routes – the Suez and Panama Canals – along with geopolitical fault lines and an increasing scepticism about the benefits of global trade in several countries, pose creeping risks that have not fully manifested yet. Exporters do not seem so sure about the upbeat official outlook – they need to start raising prices soon to catch up with shipping cost surges, exposing them to competitive pressures. For Asia and India, any prolonged friction in the Strait of Hormuz, a key supply route for the region's oil and gas imports, is the biggest threat to trade and macroeconomic balances. The spike in crude prices already showed up in March as the petroleum trade deficit hit a record monthly high of $11.8 billion while oil exports slid to an eight-month low. India's high energy import dependence is known, and any spurt in global energy and food prices would also derail hopes of global interest rate cuts and improved demand.

A world in disarray, a concern about the future

M.K. Narayanan

is a former Director, Intelligence Bureau, a former National Security Adviser, and a former Governor of West Bengal

Seldom has a concatenation of circumstances across the world led to this degree of concern about the future. Many factors are responsible for this. Reckless leaders such as Ukraine's Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu, who are at the centre of the ongoing conflicts, have neither the desire nor the understanding to try and end the conflicts they are involved in. Russia's President, Vladimir Putin, shows equal disregard for the eventual outcome of the war in Ukraine, and displays intense myopia as to what can be done to achieve his end objective. The United States, which initially hoped that by strengthening the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) it could inflict a decisive defeat on Russia, and restore the immediate post-1945 world order in Europe, finds itself in a serious dilemma.

In the meantime, Mr. Netanyahu, caught napping by the massive Hamas attack in October 2023, has reacted to it in a manner typical of his general reputation, and is venting his frustration on the citizens of Gaza – which virtually approximates to genocide. This has inflamed opinions across the world, but more specifically in West Asia, and is further widening the political and religious divide. An unexpected fallout of this has been Iran's reemergence as a key player in determining the 'roll of the dice' in the affairs of this region.

Growing chaos, an absent leadership

Since 2022, geo-politics has been in various stages of disarray. While the 'rules-based international order', basically a creation of the West, is virtually dead today, it did succeed for a time in maintaining a semblance of peace across many regions. As the West seemed to weaken, and alongside the rise of China, new alliance patterns emerged. None of them, however, possessed sufficient heft to sustain a peaceful global order.

Today, large parts of the world are in chaos, though 'shooting wars' are limited to a few pockets such as Ukraine and Gaza. What is more disconcerting is the absence of leaders with a sober mien, who command a degree of influence across nations and continents, whether it is Xi Jinping, Vladimir Putin or Joe Biden. The vast majority of other western leaders clearly lack the qualities needed to sustain a peaceful international order. Many increasingly face problems in sustaining their fiefdoms. Meantime, the march of history and the progress of current technologies threaten to confine most of them to the detritus of history.

The situation is only about to worsen. The stalemate in Ukraine continues with Mr. Zelenskyy, Mr. Putin, and the West all unwilling to consider a reasonable compromise. The year 2024 will, thus, see a repetition of what has been taking place in Europe for the past two years. Whether a continued stalemate will force leaders of these countries to consider the 'unthinkable', *viz.*, use of battlefield nuclear weapons, is again a matter for debate.

> The absence of leaders who command influence across the world, new alliances, economic issues and the progress of current technologies are some of the factors

The situation in West Asia is, meanwhile, turning critical. Israel has been acting more and more like a 'wounded tiger', inflicting unpardonable casualties on the citizens of Gaza. It now confronts a direct threat from Iran, which has already fired opening 'shots across the bow' at Israel, for the attack on its consular premises in Damascus and the killing of Iranian personnel recently. All indications point to the spectre of a resurgent Iran, thereafter, taking over the leadership of militant 'Jihadism' directed against the West and 'infidels' of different kinds. The implications of an all out Iran-Israel war are dire indeed.

A new set of alliances

Today, great power rivalry seems a little more than a shadow play, which has hardly any meaning. Outside war-torn Ukraine, and the time bomb that West Asia resembles at present, the U.S. and China are indulging in feints, using proxies to try and achieve their objectives. The U.S. has yet to overcome its hubris following the series of setbacks it has been facing since Afghanistan in 2020, which has removed much of the sheen attached to its being touted as a superpower. In the case of Europe, having leaned on NATO to protect itself from Russia's offensive, it has little to offer. Europe again has little influence on Mr. Zelenskyy, notwithstanding the huge cost to their exchequers. Seldom has the situation across the region seemed less propitious.

In the east, China's economic 'woes' have stripped it of the afterglow of being a near superpower, one well positioned to challenge the U.S. and the West, militarily and economically. Over the past several months, China has been compelled to operate under the radar and its image as a superpower has diminished. Nevertheless, this has not prevented it from forging many new alliances across West Asia. Currently, the China-Russia-Iran axis has put a question mark on the predatory tactics of the U.S. and the West across much of West Asia.

There is a well-known aphorism that stipulates that 'wisdom lies in knowing when to stop'. Even as global power politics appear to lose all meaning, we are witness to a whole new set of alliances that makes little sense. What is missing in the thought processes of world leaders, however, is that it is the economy and technologies today that are the main 'drivers' and 'spoilers' in today's world. Most world leaders are not paying adequate attention to forecasts about the future of the world economies, more specifically when they include the economies of the more developed countries as well. For instance, experts warn that the U.S. economy is set to face problems sooner rather than later, while the economies of the United Kingdom and much of Europe are already in a parlous state. China's economy, despite Xi Jinping's efforts, is again not improving and it has had to cut back on many of its intended plans.

The disruptors

The politics of oil again is something that the world cannot ignore for much longer. The growing proximity, and the axis between China-Russia-Iran, indicate that military alliances apart, the politics of oil is set to roil the world in the near future.

In such a milieu, today's sanctions have ceased to have any meaning. The world, according to economists, should, hence, be prepared for a major slowdown. The implications of this could be far more disruptive than the current wars in Ukraine and Gaza or a potential conflagration in the Pacific.

Next, technology is all set to become the ultimate disruptor. Manifest attempts are being made by several leading countries to enhance their national security by protecting vital technologies, over which they possess a near-monopoly today. Artificial Intelligence is already a potential threat as far as conventional war methodologies are concerned, but while the U.S. and China are touted as militarily the most powerful today, smaller nations are beginning to pose a challenge, employing Artificial Intelligence, to level the playing field. This dimension needs to be better understood, alongside the havoc being caused in the battlefield in Ukraine by the military intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) revolution, and the relentless stare of visual infrared and electronic sensors carried by drones, aircraft, and space assets.

Finally, it is also necessary to recognise that with most arms control agreements having frayed, new nuclear warheads and cruise missiles are possibly, if not already, being designed, and also, possibly, being kept in readiness for use. A nuclear makeover is already in the making and it is only a matter of time that demands are raised by countries that possess them to seek their use. An intense debate is already on as to whether in response to the possible use of low-level battlefield nuclear weapons by Russia, the U.S. and the West should not raise the nuclear threshold by employing nuclear weapons of lower magnitude. Doomsday predictions are perhaps nearer than what many believe.

India's nuanced approach in the South China Sea

Harsh V. Pant

is Vice-President for Studies and Foreign Policy at the Observer Research Foundation (ORF), New Delhi

Pratnashree Basu

is an Associate Fellow, Indo-Pacific, at the Observer Research Foundation (ORF), Kolkata

In March 2024, India's External Affairs Minister, S. Jaishankar, articulated, in a joint statement during his visit to Manila, India's full support for the Philippines in upholding its national sovereignty. Mr. Jaishankar's comment was made amid the ongoing South China or West Philippine Sea dispute between Manila and Beijing which witnessed, arguably, its most intense and volatile year in 2023, with frequent tensions at sea and diplomatic friction. A joint statement in 2023 between New Delhi and Manila had also called for China to adhere to the rules-based maritime order and acknowledge the International Court of Justice ruling of 2016 in favour of Manila. Both these statements are part of an evolving approach that signals a departure from India's earlier more cautionary and neutral position *vis-à-vis* the South China Sea. New Delhi's position on the South China Sea has changed significantly in recent years, mirroring its broader strategic and economic aspirations on the global stage through a more clearly articulated stance backing the provisions of international maritime law, sovereignty, and sovereign rights in the South China Sea.

A policy evolution

New Delhi's engagement with the region was initially primarily economic, driven by its Look East Policy, which aimed to enhance economic integration with Southeast Asia and the imperative to secure energy resources to fuel its growing economy. The participation of Indian state-owned enterprises, such as the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation's overseas arm (ONGC Videsh), in oil and gas exploration projects in Vietnam's exclusive economic zones (EEZs) and other similar ventures not only signified India's economic stakes in the region but also its support for the principle of freedom of exploration and exploitation of maritime resources within the bounds of international law, specifically the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

> New Delhi's strategic recalibration recognises the South China Sea's critical importance to regional security and the global maritime order

The transformation of India's policy orientation from Look East to Act East under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration has marked a shift towards a more strategic and active engagement with the Indo-Pacific region. This policy evolution reflects India's acknowledgment of the changing geopolitical landscape and the need for a more proactive and multifaceted foreign policy approach with the Act East Policy emphasising not only economic integration but also strategic partnerships and expanded security cooperation with countries in the Indo-Pacific including Vietnam, Malaysia, and Singapore, besides the Philippines. India has also simultaneously strengthened its own capacities through forward positioning, mission-based deployments, reinforced maritime domain awareness, and deep-water maritime facilities.

India's complex ties with China

With geopolitical tensions in the South China Sea having steadily escalated, particularly due to China's assertive territorial claims and militarisation efforts, India's stance has become more nuanced while simultaneously becoming less cautious. The evolution of India's position on the South China Sea cannot be decoupled from its complex relationship with China. The two countries have a long history of border disputes which have intensified since the Galwan Valley incident of 2020, with Beijing's periodic incursions into India's territory and, most recently, even renaming Indian villages in Arunachal Pradesh.

The Galwan Valley incident also saw India sending a frontline warship to the South China Sea in a demonstration of India's capability for asymmetric deterrence. China's assertive posture and territorial claims in the South China Sea and along India's land border have substantially disruptive implications for regional stability. India's strategic engagements, including regular naval exercises and the strengthening of military cooperation with Southeast Asian nations, serve dual purposes: they underscore India's commitment to regional security and act as a counter to China's unlawful assertions.

The ASEAN factor

New Delhi's strategic recalibration has been driven by a recognition of the South China Sea's critical importance to regional security and the global maritime order. The disputes in the South China Sea, primarily involving China and several Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries, have implications for the freedom of navigation and overflight – principles that are vital for not only India's trade and energy transportation routes but also that of countries across the globe. As a responsible stakeholder in the Indo-Pacific, India can no longer shy away from taking unambiguous positions on matters of such critical importance. Its centrality in the Indo-Pacific theatre means that its periphery is no longer only the Indian Ocean but also the wider maritime domain where China's rise is challenging the status quo in ways not anticipated before. The ASEAN centrality in India's Indo-Pacific strategy also makes it imperative for India to buttress the ASEAN position, though differences within the regional grouping continue to pose a challenge to such endeavours.

New Delhi's advocacy for a rules-based international maritime order, especially its emphasis on UNCLOS, reflects a stance against unilateral actions that threaten regional stability. This stance, while rooted in India's principled foreign policy approach, also indirectly challenges China's expansive territorial claims and activities in the South China Sea and reflects India's positioning of itself as a responsible stakeholder committed to regional stability and security. India's nuanced approach in the South China Sea, therefore, is emblematic of its broader strategy aiming to safeguard its interests while contributing to a collective effort to maintain peace, stability, and respect for international law in the Indo-Pacific region.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

First phase voting begins

Voting for the 18th Lok Sabha and general election 2024 will begin shortly. The people have probably decided who they are going to vote for. There is, however, a need for people to understand that voting should not be based on the popularity of the party or the candidate but, instead, on what they can do for the citizens of the country.

There are many areas where the country needs improvement.

The biggest need, however, is for people to come out and vote. There must be a realisation that it is only when you vote that actual change can begin.

Reakor Shisha Kharkrang,
Laitmynsaw, Shillong, Meghalaya

The mind boggles at the sheer scale of the giant undertaking which is to begin shortly. Media projections and crowds may not be the gauge of the 'mood of the nation'. This Lok Sabha election is crucial as it will decide and reshape the country's future.

The vote must be used sagaciously to prevent a further retreat from secularism and a slide into authoritarianism. There is a need to protect the Constitution and democracy in India for us and future generations.

G. David Milton,
Maruthancode, Tamil Nadu

As a senior citizen, I have seen how the democratic festival of the nation is celebrated every five years. I have also seen how sky-high promises go into oblivion once the election is over. But there is a key point. It goes without saying that the power to change lies in the hands of voters. Voters must exercise their vote choice carefully.

Kiruba Arul,
Palayamkottai, Tamil Nadu

Corrections & Clarifications

The Business page story - "Bank Bazaar set to finance Montra E-3W", April 17, 2024 - was actually about TI Clean Mobility joining hands with Bike Bazaar to offer vehicle-financial solutions. Hence, the headline should have been "Bike Bazaar set to finance Montra E-3W."

The Readers' Editor's office can be contacted by Telephone: +91-44-28418297/28576300; E-mail:readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

Is the government justified in targeting terrorists outside the border?

Rakesh Sood

is a former diplomat who served as Ambassador to Afghanistan, France, and Nepal. He was also Special Envoy of the Prime Minister on Disarmament and Nonproliferation until 2014

Tara Kartha

is the director for research at the Centre for Land Warfare Studies. She spent 17 years at the National Security Council Secretariat, which sits at the apex of India's national security architecture

PARLEY

Earlier this month, following a report in *The Guardian* stating that the Indian government had killed about 20 people in Pakistan since 2020 as part of a broader plan to eliminate terrorists on foreign soil, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh responded that India will enter Pakistan to kill terrorists. A few days later, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, too, said that under a strong government, "*atankwadiyon ko ghar mein ghus ke mare jata hai* (terrorists are being killed in their homes)". Is the Indian government justified in targeting terrorists outside the border? Rakesh Sood and Tara Kartha discuss the question in a conversation moderated by **Suhasini Haidar**. Edited excerpts:

The U.S. went to Pakistan and killed Osama bin Laden in 2011; Israel's Mossad carries out such killings. But when India or Russia do it, questions are raised, or sanctions are imposed. Do you think there are double standards when it comes to transnational killings? And is there an international rule surrounding transnational killings?

Rakesh Sood: There is no clear, legal definition in international law of targeted killings. But conventionally, there are three factors considered before carrying out targeted killings. First, whether the individual is internationally designated as a terrorist under the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) designation list. Second, whether it is difficult to get hold of this person, get them extradited, or bring them to face judicial proceedings. Third, whether it is felt that the person continues to remain engaged in terrorist activity. Then, the state may feel that it is preferable to use lethal force in a pre-emptive fashion in a precise manner so that it does not cause collateral damage. The U.S.'s killing of bin Laden would probably fall into that category of targeted killings because he ticked all these boxes. There are plenty of instances where when these three conditions were met, there was less of an international hue and cry, and when they were not met, there was more of it.

Tara Kartha: There are massive double standards. Targeted killings came post-9/11. They [the U.S.] used drone strikes and every kind of attack and not just in Afghanistan. U.S. President George Bush's call to the world was that we [the U.S.] will attack you [terrorists] wherever you are because it's self-defence. The underlying criterion for any such attack is self-defence. The UN allows this. Article 51 of the UN Charter speaks of the right of individual self-defence.

The problem with *The Guardian* story is that it includes assassinations, targeted killings, and extrajudicial killings all in the same basket in the same article, which is crazy. Each one has a different legal connotation to it. If we are to look at this issue, we have to look at the differences between these three in terms of international law and international humanitarian law.

A poster shows Sikh separatist leader Gurpatwant Singh Pannun. An Indian national has been charged by the U.S. with plotting to assassinate him on U.S. soil. AFP

Has something changed in India? In the past perhaps these operations took place quietly. But in recent times, the government has said India will chase terrorists and kill them if they go into, say, Pakistan. Is that legitimate?

TK: It is allowed under international law and under international humanitarian law. One criterion is that it should be proportionate force. A second is when the state is either responsible for the armed attack or is unwilling or unable to stop armed attacks. At all times, the principle of self-defence remains paramount. Generally, such attacks do not occur in times of peace. That is one difference between the Pakistan and Canada cases. You could argue that India is in a state of continuous conflict with Pakistan: attacks keep taking place, you [India] have raised the issue at the UN, these people are part of your list of terrorists. So, you have gone through the judicial process within your own country, and it is also sanctioned by the UN.

RS: Let's look at the three criteria. They may be in India's list, but they are not accepted internationally as terrorists. Second, there is no prospect of getting them extradited to come and face judicial proceedings. Now, you [India] could say that you are in a state of conflict with Pakistan. I don't know if that is legally correct, but politically you could maintain that. But you're not in a state of conflict, legal or political, with Canada and the U.S. Self-defence and pre-emption implies that there is a continuing and immediate threat. So, did Gurpatwant Singh Pannun constitute an immediate threat? That is an intelligence assessment. How you tick these three boxes would depend on the justification or credibility for a targeted killing.

> There are double standards when it comes to transnational killings, but by and large, you don't carry out attacks in the territories of what you call 'friendlies'.
> TARA KARTHA

Many would point out that the U.S. has carried out drone strikes and killed thousands of people, including civilians, in what it saw as targeted killings and has never been held accountable. Mossad has killed people in the UAE and other countries. So, why has the U.S. made such an issue of this?

RS: Well, that is bilateral politics. But you're right. The U.S. is guilty of having conducted targeted killings with less than adequate justification, without having felt the need to tick the three boxes. Israel, too, has done this many times. But Israel has the backing of the U.S., and the U.S. is a permanent member of the UNSC.

TK: I think in the case of Canada, it was also a question of domestic politics. And since (Prime Minister) Justin Trudeau brought it up, I think the U.S., which may have preferred to have dealt with it quietly, was forced to come out. But if you notice, even after that the U.S. has not used it in a threatening manner. They've said they are unhappy. And yes, there are double standards, but by and large, you don't carry out attacks in the territories of what you call 'friendlies'.

India's response in each of the three cases has been different. Are ties the only factor?

TK: In the case of Pakistan, I think what the Defence Minister said is, if you do this, we will reserve the right to walk in. He added that we would prefer to have good relations with our neighbours. Canada has not given any evidence to us. And at least one of those killings was of a local organised crime leader who was already in a lot of trouble in Canada. In the case of the U.S., when India says it is carrying out an investigation in national interest, if indeed someone from RA&W (Research and Analysis Wing) did do this, I can guarantee that the National Security Adviser (NSA) was not involved because this was such a ham-handed operation.

RS: It is purely a reflection of politics and ties with each other. The Defence Minister is speaking to a country that is in the throes of elections. Politicians at the best of times are not necessarily precise with their use of words, and at election times, even less so. India's responses reflect the status of importance that is attributed to ties with each of these countries and the current state of play in each of the countries.

Do you think these allegations could have a long-term impact on India-U.S. ties?

RS: It depends on how we deal with it and if we are able to carry conviction to the U.S. system. Canada has not shared any information or intelligence with us or at least nothing to the extent that would lead us to undertake an investigation of the kind that we are doing via-a-vis the U.S.'s information that has been shared with us. With Pakistan, it is open season.

TK: There has been some impact so far because all this was said publicly. But overall, no, our ties won't get severely affected because of our ties in other areas, especially innovation and defence technology. In the case of Canada, he [Trudeau] made the error of saying this in public. If he had probably said it in private, our reaction may have been quite different.

In the last few months, we have seen certain comments being made. For example, the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee has talked about transnational killings and categorised India with Russia and Iran. What should the government do?

TK: There was a hearing on Pakistan in the U.S. Congress. And one of the Congressmen, who was from Texas, intervened to raise this issue of alleged killings. There are constituencies in the U.S., like Texas, which have a large Pakistani population. That will reflect in their domestic policy. While it is worrisome, we have to take it in our stride going forward.

We need to pull up our international image and strategic messaging. For some reason we seem to think it's not necessary and that our economy speaks for itself, and our words speak for themselves. We need to do a major PR exercise not because XYZ has said something but because it makes sense.

RS: India-U.S. ties are at a government-to-government level. The U.S. NSA is going to visit India. Democracies speak with multiple voices because there are multiple constituencies. A statement by one section of society doesn't necessarily reflect the totality of the relationship between the two nations. One way to respond to criticisms is to ignore them. But that is difficult in a relationship between two democracies. So, we need to be able to take action that would address this. Whether this is in terms of more effective communication is something that the government has to evolve. In a democracy, we have multiple channels of communication. We need to be able to make better use of these.

To listen to the full interview
Scan the code or go to the link
www.thehindu.com

NOTEBOOK

The quiet heroes behind the electoral bonds stories

Reporters who file daily stories, which are sometimes deemed uninteresting, are the ones who make the big stories possible

Vignesh Radhakrishnan

On March 14, the Election Commission of India made public the names of the companies that had purchased electoral bonds. Almost immediately, *The Hindu* data team published the full list of the donors online. Our first electoral bonds story for the print edition was straightforward: it carried information on the companies that had donated the largest funds. But given time constraints, we could do little analysis on the nature of these companies.

The next day, we studied the list and found that many of the companies were unfamiliar. Some of them had sister concerns and all of them had donated to various political parties. We had to find out who owned these companies in order to contextualise the transactions. And there was no dearth of speculation on the data. Hours after the news broke, some said on social media that many of the companies were under the scrutiny of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) and Income Tax (IT) Department. Some said many pharma companies that had been reprimanded by regulators were on the list. Some identified companies that had been given a clean chit by various committees. But where could we get credible information to fact-check these claims?

That is when the grunt work began. We found out when and for what reasons the ED and IT Department were investigating some of these companies and when these companies had purchased bonds. The dateline of old stories in the media helped us find out when companies had come under the scanner of agencies and the new data showed us how they purchased bonds worth crores of rupees just days later. Old stories about some of the companies securing government contracts helped us question whether there was quid pro quo.

While other media outlets were doing similar stories, we found that some of them had included wrongly the name of one pharma company to the list of companies that were under the ED/IT Department scanner and had bought bonds just days later. Our digital archives showed that the investigators were not searching the company but only an employee.

Our search showed that a reporter of The Hindu Group covering the pharma beat had filed a copy saying the house of an employee of a pharma company was being searched by the ED. A photojournalist had clicked photos of officers entering the premises of the employee. An editor had probably asked the right questions - for instance, was it the company or the employee's house that was being searched? - and edited the story accordingly. Given that the story was filed years ago, when content management systems were still primitive and smaller stories did not always make their way online, it was noteworthy that the story was published on the website. This allowed us to find it easily. We were thankful to the editors who had ensured that such stories went up online and to the tech teams which had made sure that such stories did not get lost when *The Hindu* migrated to new content management systems or during website redesigns. In short, we realised that a lot of editorial calls, both big and small, taken over the years had made it possible for us to write the electoral bonds story accurately.

In this digital era, reporters are under great pressure. They are tasked with recording podcasts and videos and writing explainers and long-form stories. But they don't do all this at the cost of filing the so-called run-of-the-mill stories. Reporters, through their everyday stories, the first drafts of history, which are sometimes deemed uninteresting, are the ones who lay the foundation for the big stories.

vignesh.r@thehindu.co.in

PICTURE OF THE WEEK

Torrential rains in a desert city

Cars on a flooded road in Dubai. The desert city saw up to 259.5mm of rain on Tuesday, the most in 75 years since data collection began. At Dubai's airport, which is one of the busiest for international travel, nearly every flight was repeatedly delayed. The city is now grappling with the aftermath of the devastating floods. REUTERS

FROM THE ARCHIVES — The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO APRIL 19, 1974

Oil development fund planned

New Delhi, April 18: The Petroleum and Chemicals Minister, Mr. D.K. Barooah, to-day announced that an Oil Industry Development Fund for Rs. 45 crores would be created and placed at the disposal of the Oil and Natural Gas Commission.

Replying to the demands for grants of the Petroleum and Chemicals Ministry in the Lok Sabha, Mr. Barooah said that though the ONGC "is notionally an autonomous body, it entirely depended on the Government for funds."

Mr. Barooah indicated that Rs. 45 crores would be given annually. This fund would be adequate for the ONGC's purpose. The ONGC was not only going to have off-shore drilling but was also trying to get locations in other countries for oil exploration.

The Haldia refinery, which had been completed, would go into production in a couple of months.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO APRIL 19, 1924

Indian debate in Commons

A special cable to the "Bombay Chronicle" dated London, April 17, says: Last night's Indian debate was a complete fiasco. There was an air of pretence and futility all over the speeches. The front benches were deserted. The Prime Minister was absent which was adversely commented upon by Mr. Pope Simpson. The Liberal amendment asking for a commission of inquiry was not moved, as a result of active canvassing by the father-in-law of the Viceroy's son, Sir Alfred Mond and Malcolm Hailey.

From Page One

India votes from today; 102 seats in Phase 1

Some of the high-profile BJP candidates whose fates would be sealed on Friday are Union Ministers Nitin Gadkari, Bhupender Yadav and Sanjeev Balyan, and Uttar Pradesh leader Jitin Prasada. Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam's (DMK) A. Raja, Dayanidhi Maran and K. Kanimozhi, and Gaurav Gogoi of the Congress are other heavyweights in the fray.

The counting of votes will be held on June 4. Overall, 16.63 crore voters, including 8.4 crore male, 8.23 crore female and 11,371 third-gender electors, would exercise their franchise on Friday. Around 35.67 lakh first-time voters are registered to cast their votes.

Over 14.14 lakh voters who are above 85 years of age and 13.89 lakh voters with disabilities have been provided the option to vote from the comfort of their homes.

The Election Commission (EC) said that 1.87 lakh polling stations have been set up and 41 helicopters, 84 special trains and nearly 1 lakh vehicles have been deployed to ferry polling and security personnel.

Voting will begin at 7 a.m. and end at 6 p.m., though the closure of poll timings differs in some seats, the EC said.

Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar and Election Commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu reviewed election preparations.

On the eve of the elections, President Droupadi Murmu appealed to voters, especially first-time electors, to enthusiastically participate in this "festival of democracy".

Webcasting will be done in more than 50% of the polling stations along with deployment of micro-observers in all polling stations. A total of 361 observers have reached their constituencies. Besides, 4,627 Flying Squads, 5,208 Statistics Surveillance Teams, 2,028 Video Surveillance Teams and 1,255 Video Viewing Teams are engaged in surveillance round the clock to strictly and swiftly deal with any form of inducement of voters.

'Impossible to tamper with EVMs at any stage'

The EC said there have been 41,629 instances of random verification till date. Over four crore VVPAT paper slips were matched till date. There was not a single instance of mismatch. The EC said it would take a whole hour to manually count the VVPAT slips of a single polling station. "On an average, 1,000 VVPAT slips are required to be counted per polling station... The small size and special nature of the paper make the slips sticky. Manual counting of VVPAT slips is cumbersome at every step. The process cannot be expedited or hurried," it said.

"The overall environment in a counting centre is charged up and the counting personnel are under tremendous mental pressure. This is also a factor that affects the speed of counting of VVPAT slips," it said. There were also instances of recounting and re-verification of VVPAT slips till candidate-wise tallying was done. This would again consume time, its affidavit noted.

The EC assured that there cannot be any "mismatch" between votes polled and votes counted. "Votes are registered in the control unit only after receiving the confirmation from VVPAT about the print and fall of the VVPAT paper slips... There is a 'fall sensor' in the VVPAT. In case the slip is not cut or does not fall into the ballot box, the VVPAT shows 'fall error' and no vote is recorded in the control unit," the poll body explained.

The EC said that both electors and machines have increased from 2019 to 2024. The EC explained that EVMs are constituted of ballot units, control units and VVPATs. All units are sealed in the presence of candidates or their agents and stored in strong rooms for a period of 45 days.

Indian crew member returns home

On April 13, the ship was seized by Iran's Revolutionary Guards who rappelled down from a helicopter on the ship and steered it towards an Iranian base. Israel's Foreign Minister Israel Katz had described the move as a "pirate operation" saying, "I call on the European Union and the free world to immediately declare the Iranian Revolutionary Guards corps as a terrorist organisation and to sanction Iran now".

As a result, sources said the return of the other 16 Indians is more complex. The ship has been impounded, and the crew would need a second ship to help them come ashore. In addition, the *Aries* cannot be left unmanned, and therefore, some crew members would need to remain. After a strong request, including External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's intervention, the Iranian government made an exception for the female cadet and has ensured that other crew members can speak to their families in India.

The MEA swung into action after news spread that at least 17 Indian sailors were among the crew of the *MSC Aries*. The MEA had started the dialogue with the Iranian authorities through the Indian embassy in Tehran as well as the Iranian embassy here to free the Indian members of the crew. Soon thereafter, Mr. Jaishankar reached out to his counterpart Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and sought Tehran's assistance in ensuring the early release of the Indian crew members.

India should condemn Israel actions in Gaza: Iran envoy

Iraj Elahi says Iran had kept India fully briefed about the air attack on Israel on April 13 and its main objectives had been achieved; he welcomes any action to reduce tensions in the region

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

India can play an important role in stopping Israel's operations in Gaza, said Iran's Ambassador to India Iraj Elahi, adding that Iran would also "welcome" any mediatory role by India to bring peace and stability to the region.

Mr. Elahi said Iran had kept India fully briefed about the air attack on Israel on April 13. He said its main objectives, to "deter Israel" and demonstrate the "possible costs of transgressing red lines", had been achieved.

The U.S. White House has described Iran's attack, which included about 350 drones and missiles, a "spectacular and embarrassing failure", as more than 90% were intercepted by the U.S., Israel and Jordan.

> What is certain is that attacking diplomatic places is prohibited according to international law
>
> **IRAJ ELAHI**
> Iran's Ambassador to India

"This is what Israel and Western countries say. But the reality is something else, and the Israeli regime understood what Iran's missile capability is. The main objective of this operation was to deter Israel and to warn them of the dangerous consequences of their reckless deeds," Mr. Elahi told *The Hindu* in a written response to a question about the U.S. statement. He said the operations had "proven" that all the "vital military bases" of the Israeli Forces would be "easily accessible" if Iran decided to use "more developed weapons".

Iran has said its attacks were a "legitimate" response to Israel's bombing of the Iranian Embassy building in Damascus on April 1, which Mr. Elahi said was a violation of the Vienna Convention and other conventions. The External Affairs Ministry's response to both attacks has been seen as neutral, expressing concern about the escalation of tensions in the region.

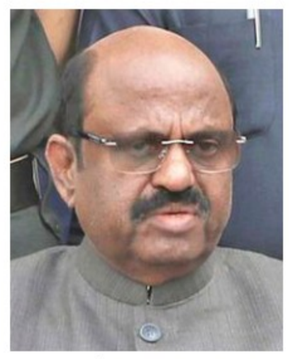
"I cannot speak for the Indian government. But what is certain is that attacking diplomatic places is prohibited according to international conventions," Mr. Elahi said. He said India should condemn Israeli operations in Gaza in retaliation for the October 7 terror attacks by Hamas, that left more than 1,200 Israelis dead, and dozens taken hostage. More than 35,000 Palestinians have been killed in Israeli operations since then.

"We believe that India can play a very important role in stopping Israel operations in Gaza", Mr. Elahi said, adding that "the Indian government can play an active role in condemning these actions." When asked whether India could play mediator in the region, he said his government would "welcome any action to reduce tension and establish peace and stability in the region".

The Iranian Ambassador also said bilateral cooperation with India over the Chabahar port project is "going well", and promised there would be "good news in this regard in the coming days".

Governor calls off visit to north Bengal after EC intervention

The Hindu Bureau
KOLKATA



C.V. Ananda Bose

Heeding the advice of the Election Commission of India (EC), West Bengal Governor C.V. Ananda Bose on Thursday called off his proposed visit to Cooch Behar.

Cooch Behar in north Bengal is going to the polls on Friday and the Governor had intended to "oversee" the polling process.

In a press statement, the Governor alleged that an attempt was being made to "politicise the Governor's office". "I will not let anyone lower the dignity of the office of the Governor... I will not allow anyone to use me as a pawn on the political chessboard," Mr. Bose said in a statement released by the Raj Bhavan. "Under the Constitution, no one can restrict the movement of a Governor. However, I do not want to get involved in the unsavoury political controversy around me," he said.

After the Governor had intimated the EC about his visit to Cooch Behar, the poll body had advised him against it. The proposed visit by the Governor to a poll-bound constituency had sparked strong reactions from the Trinamool Congress leadership.

The Governor had stated that he will be on the streets during the election and had started a portal 'Log Sabha' where people can lodge poll-related complaints. The Trinamool Congress had written to the EC saying that the Governor was interfering in the domain of the commission.

On Doordarshan, President, CJI, CEC appeal to voters

Devesh K. Pandey
NEW DELHI

In a first, top Constitutional office-holders on Thursday appealed to the voters through Doordarshan National to come forward and exercise their franchise to further strengthen the Indian democracy.

Hours ahead of the first round of the election, President Droupadi Murmu urged the electorate, particularly first-time voters, to participate in the election and contribute to deciding the country's future.

Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud said: "The Constitution gives us a multitude of rights as citizens, but it also expects that each of us performs the duty which is cast upon us, and one of the foremost duties of citizenship is to cast our vote."

Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar said the Election Commission officials had worked hard for over two years, adding every eligible voter to the electoral rolls. "...now it is your turn, please come to polling station. Millennials and Gen Z, this century belongs to you," he said.

Indian Space Research Organisation Chairman S. Somanath urged people to vote despite any prior family or personal commitments. "Your vote is an investment in our scientific technological capabilities. When you vote, you vote for progress and a better tomorrow, your vote decides the direction that India takes as a nation," Mr. Somanath said.

250 CAPF companies on ground as three seats go to the polls in Bengal

Shiv Sahay Singh
COOCH BEHAR

When people in three constituencies in West Bengal step out to vote on Friday in the first phase of the Lok Sabha election, 250 companies of Central forces will stand guard.

The Election Commission of India (EC) has deployed 262 companies of forces for only three seats in north Bengal. In Cooch Behar, which has witnessed stray incidents of violence over the past few days, 112 companies of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) have been deployed.

Last year, there was widespread violence during the panchayat elections when people voted across the State without the deployment of Central forces.

Wounds of violence: Naren Karji with a photo of his deceased son. He is accompanied by local Trinamool leader Gopal Barman.

Chiranjit Karji, a 27-year-old youth from Cooch Behar's Dinhata block, was killed while casting his vote on July 8. "He was so enthusiastic about elections... " recalled his mother Dulari Karji.

For the family, the Lok Sabha election has brought back memories of the violence at the local polling booth. "He had taken his mother to cast her vote," said Niren Karji, Chiranjit's father. Ms. Karji said when violence broke out at the polling centre, Chiranjit took her to a safe place. Moments later, he was found dead. "... Had there been deployment of Central forces, my son would have been alive today," she said.

The Trinamool Congress government provided compensation and a job to Ms. Karji's elder son. "But what will I do with the money? All I want is that no mother should suffer because of violence inside a polling booth," she said.

Gopal Barman, a local Trinamool leader from the village, said nobody knows who attacked the booth and opened fire. "We found Chiranjit inside a room with bullet injuries," he said.

ED arrests AAP MLA in Delhi Wakf Board case

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday arrested former Delhi Wakf Board chairman and AAP MLA Amanatullah Khan for alleged involvement in a recruitment scam on the Board.

The agency had summoned Mr. Khan for recording his statement under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). On his way to the ED office, he told pressmen that all the charges against him were baseless. On X, the AAP MLA posted a video clip in which he confirmed that he was arrested.

The ED is conducting a money laundering probe based on a case registered by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in November 2016, alleging that Mr. Khan as the Wakf Board chairman had recruited over 35 persons, including the Board's Chief Executive Officer, in violation of Section 24 of the Wakf Act and Delhi Wakf Rules.

ED says Arvind Kejriwal is eating foods high in sugar to seek medical bail

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) made a claim before a Delhi court on Thursday that Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who is currently lodged in Tihar Jail, is eating foods high in sugar, including mangoes and sweets every day, despite having Type 2 diabetes, to raise his blood sugar level and create grounds for medical bail or shift to a hospital.

He had been granted permission by the court to eat home-cooked food to deal with his ailment while in judicial custody.

The ED made the claim before the special judge in response to a plea by Mr. Kejriwal to get a video conferencing facility with his regular doctor, who has been treating him for diabetes. "The cause of concern is he was allowed prescribed home-cooked food because he claimed he has high diabetes. But he is having mangoes, sweets and sugar with tea. This is a basis to create a ground for bail," the ED's lawyer submitted. He added that the details were revealed by the Tihar Jail authorities when the ED wrote to them seeking information about Mr. Kejriwal's diet and medication.

Arvind Kejriwal

Advocate Vivek Jain, appearing for Mr. Kejriwal, objected to the submissions made by the ED and said that the agency was making these allegations "only for the media." The court on Thursday sought a report from the Tihar Jail.

AAP responds

Senior AAP leader Atishi said that the BJP and the ED are trying to "take his [Mr. Kejriwal's] life" by stopping the provision of home-cooked food and putting his life in danger as he had been a diabetes patient for the past 30 years, and had been taking 54 units of insulin on a daily basis. She added that for an acute diabetes patient, his diet and exercise are carefully planned and that the ED was putting Mr. Kejriwal's life in danger.

The plea to meet with his regular doctor for consultation via video conferencing, Ms. Atishi said, was because Mr. Kejriwal had been going through a diabetes reversal programme and had not been taking insulin. "He wanted to consult with his doctor regarding his treatment. But instead, the Tihar Jail authorities are not giving him access to his insulin and the ED is spreading lies in court," Ms. Atishi said.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Governor V. K. Saxena asked DG (Prisons) to submit a report on AAP claims of Delhi Chief Minister not being provided insulin in jail within 24 hours.

Vice-Admiral Tripathi to be next Navy chief

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Vice-Admiral Dinesh Tripathi

Vice-Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi has been appointed the next Chief of the Naval Staff. He is currently the Vice-Chief of the Navy and will take over on superannuation of the current Chief, Admiral R. Hari Kumar on April 30.

"The Government has appointed Vice-Admiral Dinesh Kumar Tripathi presently serving as Vice-Chief of the Naval Staff (VCNS) as the next Chief of the Naval Staff with effect from the afternoon of 30th April 2024," a government statement issued almost at midnight on Thursday said.

Born on May 15, 1964, Vice-Admiral Tripathi was commissioned on July 1, 1985, into the Executive Branch of the Indian Navy. A Communication and Electronic Warfare specialist, he has had a long and distinguished service spanning nearly 39 years, the statement said.

APPEAL

Baby Mehebub Islam, Son of Faruk Islam, 9 months admitted in Manipal Hospitals, is suffering from Congenital Heart diseases, Transitional AV Septal Defect, Moderate Right AVVR, IVC Interruption, Hepatic Veins into RA, PAPVC of right sided PVs into RA close to SVC, Mild PAH. He requires to undergo early AVSD Repair with Rerouting of PAPVC. The esimated cost of the surgery is **Rs. 6,00,000/-.**

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ELECTIONS 2024

Mehbooba, Altaf file nomination papers for polls

Peoples Democratic Party chief Mehbooba Mufti, National Conference's Mian Altaf, and J&K Apni Party's Zafar Manhas on Thursday filed their nomination papers for the Anantnag-Rajouri seat in Jammu and Kashmir.

The PDP president, who was accompanied by her supporters, urged voters "not to boycott [the election] this time".

Accompanied by National Conference vice- president Omar Abdullah, senior Gujjar leader Mian Altaf Ahmed Larvi filed his papers. "Mian Altaf will represent all parties of the INDIA bloc. I hope with the cooperation of our ally parties our candidate will emerge victorious," he said.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is yet to field any candidate from the constituency.

PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti filing nomination for the Lok Sabha election on Thursday. PTI

EC cautions Cong. candidate in Nagaland

Poll officials have cautioned the Congress's Nagaland Lok Sabha seat candidate S. Supongmeren Jamir against appealing to "communal feelings" for securing votes. This comes after his alleged assertion to some tribes that it would be difficult for "our people" if the BJP retained power at the Centre again.

Acting on the BJP's complaint, the State's Chief Electoral Officer issued the warning to Mr. Jamir a day before the lone Lok Sabha constituency from Nagaland goes to the polls on Friday.

Noting that there is an urgent need to maintain decorum, the officer said, "You, Shri S. Supongmeren Jamir, are strictly cautioned against appealing to communal feelings for securing votes in favour of your candidature". PTI

"Those who remember the 2014 polls know the condition then. They should inform first-time voters about discontent during that period

YOGI ADITYANATH
Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister

Nadda accuses Cong. of isolating the Northeast

Accusing the Congress of neglecting and isolating the Northeast, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president J.P. Nadda on Thursday said the integration of the region with the rest of the country has taken place under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. PTI

"In 2019 there was a 7% swing in favour of the BJP due to airstrikes. They expected Ram Mandir to create that swing, but that is not happening

PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN
Congress leader

Show of strength: Union Home Minister Amit Shah at a mega roadshow before filing his nomination for the Lok Sabha election, on Thursday. VIJAY SONEJI

Amit Shah to file papers from Gandhinagar today, holds roadshows

The Hindu Bureau
AHMEDABAD

Predicting a hat trick for the BJP in Gujarat, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday said that the party would win all 26 Lok Sabha seats from the State for the third straight time, adding that the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance would win more than 400 Lok Sabha seats as there was a tremendous "pro-government wave" across the country.

He also dismissed the possibility of any negative fallout from recent Rajput protests in Gujarat, saying the community would support the BJP and also forgive Union Minister Parshottam Rupala, whose remarks had triggered a large-scale agitation against the ruling party in parts of the State.

Mr. Shah, who is seeking re-election from the Gandhinagar Lok Sabha constituency for a second term, will file his nomination papers on Friday. On Thursday, he held three mega roadshows in parts of his constituency, for which thousands of party workers, supporters, and citizens gathered along routes in Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar.

'Huge margin'

"We will win all the 26 seats with a huge majority in Gujarat. People of the State love Prime Minister Narendra Modi*ji*. We are going to win by a huge margin," Mr. Shah said, during an interaction with local media *en route* to his roadshow.

The Home Minister listed the achievements of the BJP government since 2014, saying the country became strong under the leadership of the Prime Minister. "For the past 10 years, we have had the majority and we used this majority to strengthen India. We have removed Article 370, triple talaq and taken other steps for the country," he said.

"Be it the East, West, North or South, the atmosphere in the country suggests that we will get more than 400 seats. The BJP's performance in South India will be the best-ever this time," he said.

He also questioned the Opposition parties' allegations about the integrity of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), asking why they do not raise such concerns when they win State elections. "They don't win elections as they cannot match the popularity of the Prime Minister," he added.

Ahead of the roadshow, Mr. Shah said in a post on X: "Today, I will appeal to my brothers and sisters of Gandhinagar Lok Sabha Constituency to make BJP victorious and give their blessings to Modi*ji* so that he becomes Prime Minister once again to make the country No. 1 in every sector and to make Gandhinagar one of the most developed Lok Sabha constituencies in the country."

He said that the people of Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar have been supporting him for nearly three decades since he first became a legislator in 1996.

The 26 Lok Sabha constituencies in Gujarat go to the polls in a single phase on May 7.
(With PTI inputs)

INDIA partners spar in Kerala as BJP tries to gain a toehold

CPI(M)-led front is not treating Congress with kid gloves and has fielded strong candidates in all constituencies, including Wayanad, where Rahul Gandhi is contesting; Congress-led grouping hopes to cash in on the anti-incumbency factor

OVERVIEW

S. Anandan
KOCHI

It is raining promises in the unusually hot summer of April in Kerala as campaigning for the Lok Sabha election has reached a crescendo. The State will go to the polls in the second phase of the election on April 26.

The United Democratic Front (UDF), led by the Congress, and the Left Democratic Front (LDF), led by the CPI(M) – arch rivals in Kerala but allies in the INDIA bloc elsewhere, including fallen Communist citadels West Bengal and Tripura – promise to restore secularism, democratic values and federal culture while the hard sell for the BJP is "Modi's guarantees".

Having hit its nadir in the 2021 Assembly election after a stellar show in the 2019 Lok Sabha election riding on the 'Sabarimala sentiments' wave and the 'Rahul for PM' slogan, the UDF has fielded most of its sitting MPs for another term. After the Kerala Congress (Mani), which won the Kottayam seat on UDF ticket, switched sides to the Left in 2020, the UDF grouping has 18 of the 20 seats right now.

The LDF, meanwhile, is not treating its ally in the INDIA bloc with kid gloves as it has put up strong candidates in all constituencies, including Wayanad, where senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi now has a formidable opponent in the CPI's Annie Raja. The Left is unsparing in its criticism of the Congress for toeing a 'soft Hindutva' line, which it says has catalysed defection of Congress leaders to the BJP.

An anti-incumbency mood against the Left coalition, which has been in power for an unprecedented second consecutive term in the State, is what the UDF is seeking to cash in on, other than the slew of allegations of financial misappropriation against the top echelons of the CPI (M).

The Left parries these "politically motivated" charges by questioning the probity of Central agencies such as the Enforcement Directorate and the Income Tax Department. The Congress is playing into the hands of the BJP, which is desperate to open its account in the Lok Sabha from Kerala, it argues.

Rising vote share

The BJP campaign, as elsewhere, is spearheaded by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Four of its candidates have a history of having been with the Congress. The BJP, which is in alliance with the Bharat Dharma Jana Sena (BDJS) to sway a chunk of the Ezhava community votes, has lately been seen as aggressively trying to win over the Christian community.

The Catholic Church allowed itself to be leveraged by the BJP when a unit of the Syro Malabar Church screened *The Kerala Story*, a film raising the bogey of 'love jihad'.

With its vote share having risen to 15.2% in 2019, the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) – whose candidate Kummanam Rajasekharan came second in the Thiruvananthapuram constituency – has been able to make it a triangular fight in Thiruvananthapuram and Thrissur seats.

But the UDF and the LDF have resolved to ensure that the NDA continues to draw a blank in the State. Fighting the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) is a priority for both, and the Congress hopes to reap the benefits of its long-term partnership with the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML), which is seeking to retain the Ponnani and Malappuram seats, in other constituencies as well.

The LDF has been more articulate in its opposition to the CAA. It counts the support of the KC(M) as a means to make inroads into the Christian community in the central Kerala region.

Regional issues such as the increasing incidence of human-wildlife conflict in most districts and the tight financial situation of the State government are topics of discussion, along with national issues such as the use of Central agencies as a political tool and the fall in family incomes.

Personal attacks

Campaigning has slid into personal attacks and slander in at least a few constituencies witnessing a close fight, such as Vadakara, where former Health Minister and LDF candidate K.K. Shailaja has filed complaints with the police and the Election Commission (EC) against cyberbullying and fake propaganda while Shafi Parambil, the UDF candidate, has appealed for deployment of Central forces and video surveillance of polling booths.

With no evident wave favouring any political formation or alliance, nobody is ready to take chances.

Past results

The table shows the number of seats won by the alliances and their vote share in the past Lok Sabha elections in Kerala. The Congress-led UDF won 19 of the 20 seats in 2019

Year	UDF	Vote share	LDF	Vote share
1984	18	51.91	2	42.24
1989	17	49.29	3	42.93
1991	16	48.59	4	44.28
1996	10	45.75	10	44.87
1998	11	46.08	9	44.55
1999	11	46.9	9	43.7
2004	2	38.38	17	46.15
2009	16	47.73	4	41.89
2014	12	41.98	8	40.12
2019	19	47.48	1	36.29

Battle for Kerala: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi during a road show at Karuvarakundu in Malappuram district. PTI

BJP, Chirag attack RJD over 'abusive language'

Amit Bhelari
PATNA

A delegation of women leaders of the Bihar unit of the BJP and the Janata Dal (U) on Thursday approached the Election Commission to take cognisance of an alleged incident in which abusive language was used against the mother of Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas) chief Chirag Paswan at a rally of Rashtriya Janata Dal leader Tejashwi Yadav.

A purported video of a rally addressed by Mr. Yadav in Jamui went viral on social media on Thursday showing some persons using vulgar language against Mr. Paswan's mother. Mr. Yadav had addressed the meeting on Wednesday in support of RJD candidate Archana Ravidas, who is locked in a direct contest against LJP(RV) candidate Arun Bharti, the brother-in-law of Mr. Paswan.

Mr. Yadav is seen on the podium giving a speech while a few persons are seen making the abusive remarks right below the stage.

Mr. Paswan slammed Mr. Yadav over the incident, saying he should have intervened in the matter and asked them to stop. "It is very unfortunate that with every passing day, the standard of discourse is going down," Mr. Paswan said. "If I had been in his place, I would not have tolerated them and would have raised strong objections."

Hefting grain sacks, running tea stalls: Haryana candidates play many parts

Ashok Kumar
GURUGRAM

With the Lok Sabha election campaign heating up in Haryana, which is slated to vote on May 25, politicians in the agrarian State are willing to walk the extra mile – from lifting grain sacks and running a tea stall to shaking a leg – in a bid to win over the electorate.

In a 14-second video posted on X on Wednesday, the BJP's Kurukshetra candidate, Naveen Jindal, who is the chairman of Jindal Steel and Power Ltd., can be seen lifting a sack of grain on his back and carefully treading on a wooden plank placed on an incline to a truck surrounded by his followers and spectators. The camera follows the 54-year-old as he finally manages to heave the sack inside the truck and turns back, panting, to greet the crowd with folded hands to loud cheers and slogans of "Naveen Jindal zindabad! (Long live Naveen Jindal!)"

Not to be left behind in the race to strike a chord with the common man, Aam Aadmi Party Haryana president and INDIA bloc candidate Sushil Gupta posted a video on X on Thursday showing him running a tea stall in Kurukshetra's Shahbad market. Surrounded by his supporters, Mr. Gupta, a former Rajya Sabha member, can be seen making and serving tea, with the post's tagline reading: "*Badlenge Kurukshetra, Badlenge Haryana* (Will change Kurukshetra, will change Haryana)".

Mr. Jindal quit the Congress to join the BJP just hours before the ruling party released the list naming him as its candidate from this Lok Sabha constituency. Pitched against Mr. Jindal and Mr. Gupta, the Indian National Lok Dal secretary-general, Abhay Chautala, adds another dimension to the electoral contest for this seat.

In Hisar, the stage is set for an intra-family contest among Chautalas. The Jannayak Janta Party's candidate Naina Chautala, mother of former Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala, joined a group of women dancing to folk and devotional songs in Sector 13. Ms. Chautala, the first woman from the Chautala family to take the plunge into active politics, is credited with holding all-woman public meetings called *Hari Chunari Chaupals*.

She is pitted against her father-in-law's younger brother and BJP candidate, Ranjit Singh Chautala, who resigned as an Independent MLA to join the ruling party, and her sister-in-law Sunaina Chautala, the INLD candidate. The sitting MP from Hisar, former bureaucrat Brijendra Singh, quit the BJP to join the Congress in March. The Congress is yet to announce its candidates for the State.

In Sirsa, BJP candidate Ashok Tanwar, a former Haryana Congress chief, did not miss the opportunity to visit and congratulate Komal Garg, a local girl who secured the 221st rank in the UPSC exam. Rohtak's BJP candidate Arvind Sharma posted pictures of himself visiting a *gaushala* and attending weddings.

Season's flavour: AAP leader and Kurukshetra candidate Sushil Gupta serving tea at Shahbad Mandi. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

LS election critical to protect idea of India, says Rahul in video

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

In the address, he says Congress workers have a huge responsibility to save the Constitution

The 2024 Lok Sabha election is critical to protect the idea of India and the Constitution, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said in a video address to party workers on the eve of the first phase of voting. Congress workers have a huge responsibility on their shoulders as they must tell the people that the BJP is "destroying" the idea of India, he added.

"You are the backbone of our party. I thought that since it is election time, I should talk to you directly. This is not an ordinary election, this is an election to save the Constitution and democracy, in which *babbar sher* workers like you have a huge responsibility," he said.

"The BJP-RSS are against the idea of India. They are attacking our Constitution, the country's democratic structure, and our institutions, including the Election Commission, as well as the legal framework of India," Mr. Gandhi alleged.

"The Congress is going to defeat the BJP and its ideology," he said.

Mr. Gandhi listed the party's guarantees: an annual dole of ₹1 lakh to one woman from every poor family, the right to apprenticeship, a legal guarantee of minimum support prices for farmers, the elimination of contract labour, 30 lakh government jobs, abolition of the Agniveer scheme, and a solution to the problems in the Goods and Services Tax (GST) system.

"You helped us bring key ideas from the people of India into our manifesto for the election. We rely on you. I send you my best wishes," he said.

INBRIEF

Indigenously built cruise missile successfully tested

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) conducted a successful flight test of a "long range subsonic indigenously developed cruise missile" from the Integrated Test Range (ITR) in Chandipur off the coast of Odisha, the DRDO announced on Thursday. "The missile followed the desired path using waypoint navigation and demonstrated very low altitude sea-skimming flight. During the test, all subsystems performed as per expectation," the DRDO said in a statement. The details or the specifications of the missile were not mentioned but the missile looked a lot similar to the Nirbhay subsonic cruise missile.

ED attaches properties worth ₹98 crore of Raj Kundra

The Enforcement Directorate (ED), Mumbai Zonal Office has provisionally attached immoveable and moveable properties worth ₹97.79 crore belonging to Ripu Sudan Kundra, also known as Raj Kundra, under provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002. The attached properties include a residential flat in Juhu in the name of his wife, actor Shilpa Shetty, a bunglow in Pune and equity shares in the name of Raj Kundra. The ED initiated a probe on the basis of multiple First Information Reports registered against Variable Tech Pte Ltd, the late Amit Bhardwaj, Ajay Bhardwaj, Vivek Bhardwaj, Simpy Bhardwaj, Mahender Bhardwaj and a number of MLM agents, an ED media statement said on Thursday.

Srinagar likely to be tagged as World Craft City from India

The World Crafts Council International (WCCI), a Kuwait-based organisation working on recognition and preservation of traditional crafts, has picked Srinagar for mapping its craft clusters before its final nomination as the World Craft City (WCC) from India this year. A three-member team of the WCCI is in the city to inspect craft clusters, processes involved, and the status of artisans. The final announcement about the city's inclusion is likely in the next two months. "The craft work we witnessed so far in Srinagar is flawless. The world needs to know about it," a WCCI member, told *The Hindu*.

WHO defines pathogens that transmit through air

Pathogens that transmit through the air will be described by the term 'infectious respiratory particles' or IRPs, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). The world health body has thus ended the lack of a common terminology to describe the transmission of these pathogens, which was particularly challenging during the global COVID-19 pandemic. The announcement on Thursday came following wide-ranging consultations across multiple steps in 2021-2023. "Varying terminologies contributed to challenges in public communication and efforts to curb the transmission of the pathogen," the WHO noted.

Activity-based curriculum drawn up for anganwadis

NEP-based framework document says learning begins at birth; staff in 14 lakh anganwadis to be trained and parents encouraged to engage toddlers in activities to reach key milestones

Maitri Porecha
NEW DELHI

A child's learning begins at month zero, emphasises the National Framework of Early Childhood Stimulation, 2024, which lays down month-by-month activities to be conducted by parents, anganwadi staff and ASHA workers for children from birth to the age of three.

The framework document has been finalised by an internal committee comprising representatives from the Ministries of Women and Child Development, Health and Family Welfare and Education, the Department of School Education and Literacy, the National Council of Educational Research and Training, the Institute of Home Economics, the University of Delhi and civil society organisations.

New approach: The new curriculum involves talking, playing and listening to music. FILE PHOTO

Continuous learning

Titled 'Navchetana', the activity-based curriculum follows the National Education Policy, 2020 that calls for a continuum of learning. Staff in 14 lakh anganwadis will be given training in the curriculum.

The curriculum involves talking, playing, moving, listening to music and sounds, and stimulation of all the senses – particularly sight and touch in order to reach developmental milestones across domains, and develop "early language, and emergent literacy and numeracy".

As much as 75% of the brain develops in the first three years of a child's life, says Namya Mahajan, a member of the internal committee and founder of Rocket Learning. The national framework provides detailed information on the importance of brain development in the first three years, and step by step instructions for caregivers and frontline workers on conducting early stimulation activities, she said.

This involves getting the child's attention, communicating with and responding to the child, introducing age and skill appropriate activities for play, and following the child's lead during the activities.

It also involves helping the child with a new task, and praising the child for her efforts.

The document entails 36 sets of activities for children from months 0 to 36. It encourages the use of household objects such as cups, bottles or leftover pieces of fabric. Activities involve reaching for objects, imitating sounds, spinning bangles, putting objects in and out of a jar and removing knots in a handkerchief in the first year.

Step by step

After a year, the activities include encouraging children to feed themselves and explore the house, involving them in the kitchen, playing with dough and introducing them to a mirror.

At the age of 18 months, children are encouraged to scribble with a crayon and at 24 months, the recommended activities include shoe sorting and matching. By the age of three, children are introduced to a cycle, asked to say their names and identify colours.

The framework says the activities will help identify children with developmental delays. In such a situation, the anganwadi worker or parent can adapt by picking up activities recommended for children a few months younger.

'Nestlé baby food sold in India has higher sugar content'

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India is looking into the Swiss NGO report.

Nestle's baby food products sold in India, as well as in African and Latin American countries, have higher sugar content, in comparison to the same products sold in European markets, according to a report released recently by a Swiss NGO, the Public Eye and International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN).

Around 150 baby products manufactured by the global food and beverage giant and sold in different countries were tested in a Belgian laboratory, according to IBFAN.

It was found that all 15 Cerelac products for six-month-old babies, which are sold without any added sugars in the United Kingdom and Germany, contained 2.7 grams of added sugar per serving in India. Products sold in Ethiopia and Thailand contained nearly 6 grams, the report said.

Cutting back on sugar

Despite World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations against added sugar in foods meant for children under the age of three, Indian regulators do allow a limited amount of sucrose and fructose in baby food.

However, a Nestle India spokesperson responded to the allegations on Thursday, saying that the reduction of added sugars is a priority for the company. Over the last five years, added sugars have been reduced by up to 30% in its infant cereal products, the company said.

These products are manufactured to ensure the appropriate delivery of nutritional requirements such as protein, carbohydrates, vitamins, minerals, and iron for early childhood, Nestle India said.

"We never compromise and will never compromise on the nutritional quality of our products. We constantly leverage our extensive Global Research and Development network to enhance the nutritional profile of our products. Compliance is an essential characteristic of Nestle India and we will never compromise on that. We also ensure that our products manufactured in India are in full and strict compliance with CODEX standards [a commission established by WHO and the Food and Agriculture Organisation] and local specifications [as required] pertaining to the requirements of all nutrients including added sugars," it said.

The company also added: "We regularly review our portfolio and continue to innovate and reformulate our products to further reduce the level of added sugars, without compromising on nutrition, quality, safety, and taste."

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, which regulates the manufacture, storage, distribution, sale, and import of food articles, while also establishing standards to ensure food safety, said that it is looking into the IBFAN report.

Arun Gupta from the Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI) said that children below the age of two should not be given any additional sugar or salt in their diet. "This predisposes them to non-communicable diseases, the burden of which is growing in India. Our own government surveys have warned of the growing obesity volume among children," he said.

The WHO has warned that the introduction of added sugar in baby foods can contribute to the development of addictive eating habits and a preference for sweet tastes from an early age.

'Double standards'

Hepatologist Cyriac Abby Philips, who debunks medical misinformation on social media under the moniker The Liver Doc, accused Nestle of "double standards" on X.

"Nestle baby food – Cerelac has global retail sales of above one billion U.S. dollars. The highest figures are in low- and middle-income countries, with 40% of sales just in Brazil and India," he said.

"Nestle has double standards for the Western market compared to the Asian market," he added.

DD News sports new saffron logo before polls

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Drawing criticism on social media, Doordarshan News has launched a new saffron-coloured logo by announcing that it is now available in a refurbished avatar.

The logo's colour has been changed from ruby red to saffron before the Lok Sabha polls.

"Get ready for a news journey like never before... We have the courage to put: Accuracy over speed Facts over claims Truth over sensationalism, Because if it is on DD News, it is the truth!," the state-run news channel posted on X.

Saffron adorns the top band of the national tricolour, while the colour is also used predominantly in the ruling BJP's party flag.

Plea in SC seeks access to reports on Manipur riots, arrest of 'radical' elements

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Manipur Tribals Forum, Delhi (MTFD) has approached the Supreme Court with an intervening application, seeking that the two committees constituted by the court – one headed by former Director General of Police Dattatray Padsalgikar and the other by Justice Gita Mittal (retired) – be directed to supply copies of their reports to them.

The MTFD, representing interests of the Kuki-Zo people, has also sought for an order directing the arrest of Koroungangba Khuman and Pramot Singh, leaders of armed radical Meitei outfits Arambai Tenggol and Meitei Leepun, respectively. It also sought that the Manipur government be directed to give information on the progress of investigation into the deaths of over 170 Kuki-Zo people killed in the ethnic conflict.

The State has been seeing an ethnic conflict between the valley-based Meitei people and the hills-based Scheduled Tribe Kuki-Zo people since May 3 last year. Over 220 people have been killed in the violence since then, thousands more have been injured, and tens of thousands have been internally displaced.

In the plea filed by the MTFD, the petitioners said outfits such as the Arambai Tenggol and the Meitei Leepun were allegedly "preparing for a new onslaught" on the tribal community after the Lok Sabha elections.

"We are coming before this court with folded hands to take the urgent measures that are necessary which, if happens, may be even more extensive than the first rounds of attack," they said.

They added that they have sent as many as five notes to the committee headed by DGP Padsalgikar, who has told them that the information had been sent to the local police.

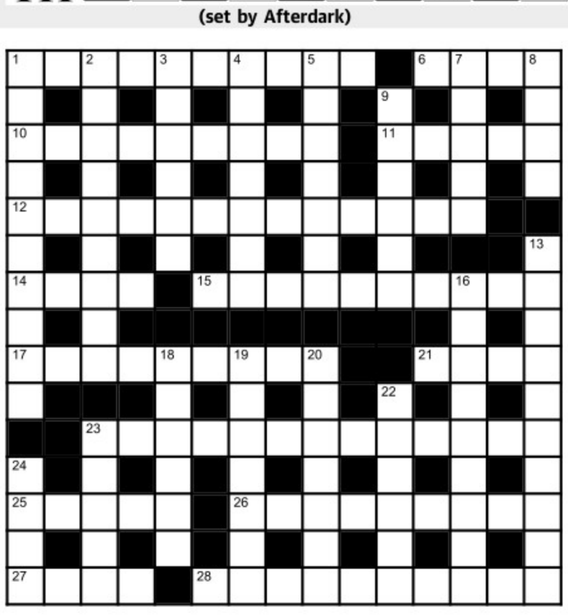
Despite the notes and the time that has passed since, no action seems to have been taken in the cases of atrocities against Kuki-Zo people, the MTFD said, adding that a similar situation prevailed with respect to the rehabilitation of the Kuki-Zo victims.

TH CROSSWORD + 14153

(set by Afterdark)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ *https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

1 Mostly, muscles tend to repair with emollients (10)
6 Prohibits graduates to skirt rule (4)
10 Corruption in election, university to bar a dean ultimately (9)
11 Use of java, illegal? Not entirely (5)
12 Google and Yahoo can hire designers in a heap after director quits (13)
14 Kate is running, catch. (4)
15 Certainly betrayer was beheaded and butchered in the recent past (10)
17 Ohio writer met Frank, perhaps (4-5)
21 Criminals are working in computer science (4)
23 Considerately US agent withdrew English partner without dissension at island (13)
25 Japanese cartoon cinema shot without opening credits (5)
26 Cold legal claim let loose on leading entrepreneur by customers (9)
27 Skipper moves to the end, close to win (4)
28 Conceptually, sailor's essay's lousy, lacking substance (10)

Down

1 Dismissal of evidence... (10)
2 ...breaks law between Michigan and UK taking two drugs to a US city (9)
3 Dispatch meal beyond 1 (6)
4 Spell at the far end at Brisbane's nasty? Yes, almost (4,3)
5 Newton's old, eighty in heart this evening (7)
7 Assemble in Indian state where morning arrives earlier (5)
8 Austin takes storage for grains from Saint Louis (4)
9 One who prohibits colours! (6)
13 Group of church elders almost urge bishop to add territory within 2 years (10)
16 Lee & Milton partying with Salve (9)
18 Fussed on nothing, two females engaged heartlessly (6)
19 Core of maize taken by sailors in two companies at Britain (7)
20 Doctor's study? It's shabby leading to tension (7)
22 Struggle to get accommodation, finally not available in capital (6)
23 Gadget of doctor that is razor-sharp at the end (5)
24 Save broken container (4)

SUDOKU

6	3			2				
	1				3	9		
	8						3	2
	4		8	1	9			
1				4				5
			6	3	5		2	
9	7						8	
		6	3				7	
				9			5	1

No.SS6133 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle

F		N		I		I		M		A		U		A
A	B	A	N	D	O	N		I	N	V	E	N	T	S
M		U		L		F		S		A		I		S
O	B	S	C	E	N	E		C	O	N	D	O	N	E
U		E				C		H		T		N		S
S	P	A	G	H	E	T	T	I		G	R	I	T	S
				E				E		A		S		O
B	I	O	M	A	S	S		F	O	R	B	E	A	R
A		N		V		T				D				
S	I	S	S	Y		R	H	O	D	E	S	I	A	N
S		C		M		E		R				N		U
C	U	R	F	E	W	S		A	D	O	P	T	E	D
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E	L	E	V	A	T	E		L	E	A	D	I	N	S
F		N		L		D		E		L		T		T

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

9	5	3	7	1	8	2	4	6
2	6	8	4	9	3	1	7	5
7	4	1	2	5	6	3	8	9
3	2	5	1	6	7	4	9	8
4	8	9	3	2	5	7	6	1
6	1	7	9	8	4	5	3	2
5	3	6	8	4	2	9	1	7
1	7	2	6	3	9	8	5	4
8	9	4	5	7	1	6	2	3

FAITH

Krishna turns messenger

Human beings are repeatedly born based on their karma or deeds. God is not influenced by karma, but He also takes various births.

Lord Krishna declares in Sri Bhagavad Gita that many births of His have passed (*Bahuni mey vyathithani* – Chapter IV sloka 5).

Vedas also say He takes various births and manifestations (*Ajayamano Bahudha Vijayathe*). God assigns a valid reason to be born, and the most important is to protect good and pious people and to establish dharma (*Parithranaya Sadhunam* – Chapter IV sloka 8).

Sri Bharathan Swamy said in a discourse that Lord Krishna, transcending His supremacy, donned the role of an emissary on behalf of the Pandavas. To instil confidence in Sri Sita's mind, Hanuman, degrading his status, told her in Asokavanam that he himself, though the last and least of the monkey legions, crossed the ocean.

Lord Krishna, to boost the confidence of the Pandavas, lowered Himself to the position of a messenger.

The word 'Sri' refers to the divine blessings of Goddess Mahalakshmi. It denotes wealth, happiness, prosperity, and great deeds.

The word is prefixed to God as Sri Krishna and Sri Rama, as She is ever with Him.

INBRIEF

Ashok Leyland, South Indian Bank tie up for dealer finance

Ashok Leyland Ltd. (ALL) has entered into a pact with South Indian Bank Ltd. (SIB) through which the latter will provide inventory financing to ALL dealers under its dealer finance programme. "This alliance will offer appropriate inventory financing solutions to our network of dealers," said ALL Director and CFO Gopal Mahadevan. Our goal is to offer complete financing choices to the dealers, said SIB Senior General Manager & Group Business Head S.S. Biji.

Sundaram Home Finance opens branch in Kota

Sundaram Home Finance Ltd. (SHFL) said it had opened a new branch in Kota and plans to open another one in Udaipur in the coming months. The current expansion in Rajasthan, combined with the company's plans to target the Western India market, will go towards gradually expanding SHFL's footprint outside South India, said Managing Director D. Lakshminarayanan. Rajasthan is a vibrant market with a high degree of credit culture, he said in a statement.

Veranda Learning buys Logic Management Training Institute

Veranda Learning Solutions Ltd. (VLS) announced that its subsidiary Veranda XL Learning Solutions Pvt. Ltd. had entered into a business transfer agreement with Kochi-based Logic Management Training Institute Pvt. Ltd. to acquire the latter's business with effect from April 1. The payout will be made in tranches from FY25 to FY29. The total payout has a floor price of ₹46 crore and a maximum cap of ₹75 crore, the education firm said in a regulatory filing.

Infosys softens view as growth slows

Given uncertain demand conditions across key customer markets, Infosys projected revenue to grow by 1%-3% in constant currency terms in the current fiscal year to March 2025; CEO Parekh says digital, discretionary spending 'are a bit slower'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Infosys on Thursday reported fourth-quarter net profit rose 30% YoY to ₹7,969 crore, from ₹6,128 crore a year earlier.

The IT major's revenue from operations rose 1.3% to ₹37,923 crore in the quarter against ₹37,441 crore in the corresponding period last year. But its revenues in constant currency terms remained flat YoY and slid 2.2% sequentially.

Infosys reported large deal total contract value for Q4 rose 44% sequentially to $4.5 billion, 44% of which were net new deals.

For FY24, the company reported revenues of ₹1,53,670 crore, a 4.7% growth YoY and an operating margin of 20.7%, a decline of 0.4%.

Given uncertain demand conditions across key customer markets, Infosys pegged its revenue growth guidance for FY25 at 1%-3%.

Infosys CEO Salil Parekh said, "We are seeing good traction in large deals. Digital and discretionary spending are a bit slower. Yet we have a good view of the early part of the year. There is slowness in telco, high-tech and manufacturing; however, BFSI (banking, financial services and insurance) may get better in FY25."

'No fresh hiring'

Infosys said there were no hiring plans yet for the new fiscal, as current utilisation was at 85%.

"Hiring models have changed significantly over the years," said CFO Jayesh Sanghrajka. "We are doing more than half of the hiring off-campus. Our attrition has also come down significantly. That is the reason for net headcount reduction," he added.

Infosys's headcount for FY24 declined by 25,994 to 3,17,240.

Infosys also disclosed that Infosys McCamish, its software and services arm for the life insurance industry, incurred a $38 million loss in FY24 due to a cyber attack in November 2023.

Topline slows

Infosys posted a 30% YoY rise in net profit at ₹7,969 crore for Q4 FY24

- The company reported revenues of ₹1,53,670 crore, a 4.7% growth YoY and an operating margin of 20.7%
- But revenues in constant currency terms remained flat YoY and slid 2.2% sequentially
- A November cyberattack led to $38 mn loss in Infosys McCamish, its life insurance software services arm

India must invest more in education, health to tap demographic dividend: IMF

Sriram Lakshman
LONDON

India should focus on investing heavily in education and health to ensure that its growing, young population is adequately employed, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has suggested.

The World Bank had said earlier in April that India and other South Asian countries were squandering their demographic dividend.

"We have 15 million people being added to the labour force every year," observed Krishna Srinivasan, who directs the IMF's Asia and Pacific Department.

Krishna Srinivasan

"If India really wants to benefit from this population adding to the labour force, it has to invest big time in both education and health," he said at a press briefing on Thursday in reply to a question from *The Hindu* on the employment situation in India and policy recommendations.

"I would prioritise that much more so than other kinds of spending," he said. Some 65% of Indians are under the age of 35.

'Right skills'

The labour force needs to have the right skills, competing with AI and other such challenges, Mr. Srinivasan said.

The IMF has projected a growth rate of 6.8% for India's economy in FY25 notwithstanding the high rate of unemployment among youth, which according to some estimates was just above 40% in 2022-23.

Growth in India was led by public investment and private consumption, Mr. Srinivasan said. While public capex spending (for example infrastructure) had had a "very beneficial" impact on growth, the issue was whether it had crowded in private investment, observed the IMF official.

"What we've seen is, until recently, that wasn't happening much, so private investment is on the weaker side," he said, adding that of late there had been an uptick in private investment, which augured well for the future.

"We also see consumption picking up," Mr. Srinivasan said, linking it to an ongoing deceleration in inflation in the country.

NBBL, SBI enable NCMC recharge on Bharat BillPay

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

NPCI Bharat BillPay Ltd. (NBBL), a wholly owned subsidiary of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), in association with State Bank of India, has introduced SBI National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) on the Bharat BillPay platform for the convenience of travellers.

Customers can top up their NCMC cards with up to ₹10,000 via Bharat BillPay-enabled platforms that support various methods such as prepaid, debit and credit cards, NBBL said.

MARKETS

MARKET WATCH

	THURSDAY	% CHANGE
Sensex	72,489	-0.62
US Dollar	83.52	0.10
Gold	73,700	-0.06
Brent oil	87.14	—

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Enter	3019.30	-87.10
Adani Ports	1295.55	-8.80
Apollo Hosp	6074.15	-260.60
Asian Paints	2807.70	-22.30
Axis Bank	1024.00	-27.90
Bajaj Auto	9021.30	102.15
Bajaj Finserv	1593.90	-24.60
Bajaj Finance	6893.20	-61.05
Bharti Airtel	1265.75	49.30
BPCL	589.60	-2.70
Britannia Ind	4695.00	-45.70
Cipla	1347.30	-27.90
Coal India	438.60	-14.60
Divis Lab	3708.90	-55.30
Dr Reddys Lab	5957.15	-93.20
Eicher Motors	4351.20	-4.50
Grasim Ind	2226.05	-16.90
HCL Tech	1466.85	-10.45
HDFC Bank	1494.70	-14.55
HDFC Life	605.65	1.05
Hero MotoCorp	4251.30	-71.60
Hindalco	612.80	3.95
Hind Unilever	2214.80	-6.00
ICICI Bank	1055.45	-11.60
IndusInd Bank	1474.40	-16.55
Infosys	1419.25	4.80
ITC	418.85	-7.05
JSW Steel	844.80	-0.45
Kotak Bank	1786.75	-5.85
L&T	3550.95	7.50
LTIMindtree Ltd.	4697.15	34.30
M&M	2024.95	-6.35
Maruti Suzuki	12405.00	-97.70
NestleIndia	2462.55	-83.55
NTPC	351.15	-8.10
ONGC	274.15	-9.00
PowerGrid Corp	280.10	5.85
Reliance Ind	2928.65	-2.85
SBI Life	1456.95	-5.80
State Bank	744.80	-6.90
Shriram Finance Ltd.	2371.45	-29.30
Sun Pharma	1516.40	-21.15
TataConsumerProduct	1134.55	-1.10
Tata Motors	971.35	-21.45
Tata Steel	160.05	0.00
TCS	3862.00	-10.80
Tech Mahindra	1179.65	-16.15
Titan	3525.10	-120.80
UltraTech Cement	9382.75	-81.05
Wipro	444.35	-4.00

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on April 18

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	83.34	83.66
Euro	88.98	89.32
British Pound	104.00	104.40
Japanese Yen (100)	53.95	54.16
Chinese Yuan	11.51	11.56
Swiss Franc	91.73	92.09
Singapore Dollar	61.28	61.52
Canadian Dollar	60.59	60.83
Malaysian Ringitt	17.41	17.50
Australian Dollar	53.71	53.92

Source:Indian Bank

NSE to unveil derivatives on Nifty Next 50 on April 24

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The National Stock Exchange (NSE) on Thursday said it will introduce derivative contracts on Nifty Next 50 index on April 24.

The Nifty Next 50 index represents 50 firms from Nifty 100 after excluding the Nifty 50 firms.

In a statement, NSE said it "has received approval for derivatives on Nifty Next 50 index from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) and will launch these contracts from April 24, 2024". Derivatives refer to financial contracts between two or more parties and derive value from an underlying asset or benchmark.

ITC Infotech targets cloud boost through ₹485-cr. Blazeclan buy

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Blazeclan, set up in 2010, had turnover of ₹249.5 crore during the fiscal year ended March 2023

ITC Infotech, the technology arm of the ITC Group, is set to acquire Pune-based cloud-services firm Blazeclan Technologies Pvt. Ltd. in an all-cash deal worth up to ₹485 crore, according to a filing by ITC.

A wholly owned subsidiary of ITC Ltd., ITC Infotech has signed a share-purchase agreement to acquire 100% of the share capital of Blazeclan Technologies, a cloud-consulting company offering services on AWS, Azure and GCP.

The proposed acquisition reiterates ITC Infotech's commitment to help clients steer digital transformations and deliver business outcomes built on the foundation of strong cloud capabilities, it said.

'Leverage platforms'

ITC Infotech proposes to leverage the platforms and accelerators built by Blazeclan and the strong certified architect pool to strengthen its cloud offerings, the company said.

Blazeclan Technologies, set up in 2010, reported a turnover of ₹249.50 crore during fiscal 2022-23.

India's FY24 pulse imports hit 6-year high on red lentils

Reuters
MUMBAI

India's pulses imports in fiscal 2024 surged 84% year-on-year to the highest level in six years after lower production prompted India to allow duty-free imports of red lentils and yellow peas, government and industry officials said.

Higher imports by India, the world's biggest importer, producer and consumer of protein-rich pulses, have been supporting global prices and helping bring down stocks in exporting countries such as Canada and Myanmar.

India imported 4.65 million metric tonne of pulses in the year ended March 31, 2024.

Bajaj Auto Q4 profit rises 35% on demand

Reuters
BENGALURU

Bajaj Auto beat fourth-quarter profit estimates, helped by strong domestic demand for its motorcycles and a recovery in two-wheeler exports.

The 'Pulsar' bike-maker's standalone net profit rose 35.1% to ₹19.36 billion for the three months to March 31 from a year earlier. Analysts expected a profit of ₹18.26 billion, as per LSEG data.

Strong local demand for two-wheelers, which boosted results in earlier quarters for Bajaj Auto and its rivals, continued in the March quarter with improved demand for entry-level models in rural India and steady sales of mid-level motorcycles in cities.

Two-wheeler sales rose about 26% to 9,16,817 units. Total revenue rose 29% to ₹114.85 billion, while analysts expected a revenue of ₹108.85 billion.

A gradual recovery in some of the overseas markets, including South Asia, boosted shipments.

Tata said to plan using new $1 bn plant to make JLR cars

Reuters
NEW DELHI

Tata Motors will manufacture Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) luxury cars at a $1 billion plant that it is planning to build in Tamil Nadu, two sources with direct knowledge of the matter said.

The plan would mark the first time JLR-branded cars would be produced from scratch in India.

The cars would be sold domestically and also exported, according to one of the sources, who declined to be identified as the plans were private.

Tata Motors, which acquired JLR in 2008, declined to comment on what it called speculation. It announced plans for the Tamil Nadu plant in March but did not disclose what vehicles would be manufactured there or the plant's intended production capacity.

JLR has three car factories in Britain and also builds cars in China, Brazil and Slovakia. In India, where it sells the Range Rover Evoque, Discovery Sport and Jaguar F-Pace, it is still a niche brand. The models sold in India are exported from Britain as fully built vehicles or in parts that are then assembled at a plant near Pune city.

GENEVA

Human cases of bird flu 'an enormous concern', says WHO

GETTY IMAGES

The World Health Organisation voiced alarm on Thursday at the growing spread of H5N1 bird flu to new species, including humans, who face an "extraordinarily high" mortality rate. UN health agency's chief scientist Jeremy Farrar stressed the need to develop the vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostic measures. AFP

UNITED NATIONS

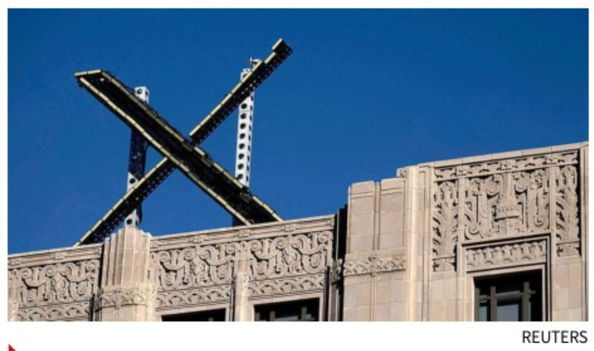
U.S. to vote against Palestinian bid for full UN membership

AFP

The UN Security Council is due to vote on Thursday on a Palestinian bid for full UN membership, said diplomats, a move that Israel ally the United States is expected to block because it would effectively recognise a Palestinian state. A council resolution needs at least nine votes in favour and no vetoes to pass. REUTERS

ISLAMABAD

X working with Pakistan govt. to 'understand concerns' over ban



REUTERS

Social media platform X said on Thursday it would work with Pakistan's government "to understand its concerns" after authorities insisted an ongoing two-month ban was based on security grounds. The platform has been rarely accessible since February 17 when Imran Khan's party called for protests. AFP

OUAGADOUGOU

Burkina Faso expels French diplomats for 'subversive activities'

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Burkina Faso has expelled three French diplomats for "subversive activities", according to a Foreign Ministry note on Thursday. The three were declared "*persona non grata*" and told to leave the country in 48 hours, it said. The French government on Thursday said there were no grounds for the "unfounded" allegations. AFP

In Israel's north, a slow-burning war is raging with Hezbollah

Stanly Johny
WESTERN GALILEE, ISRAEL

"We live in constant fear," says Asiya, who lives in a village near the Israeli-Lebanon border. Hailing from Israel's minority Druze community, Asiya hosts tourists and visiting delegations at her home in Yanuh-Jat for lunch. She offers traditional Druze food in a large house on a hill. From her balcony, the heights on the Lebanese-Israel border that have been on fire for the pasty six months are visible.

"After the war began, business was down. We get practically no tourists," says Asiya, a mother of three who lost her husband a few years ago.

Ever since Hamas's October 7 attack on Israel and the latter's subsequent invasion of the Gaza Strip, Israel's northern border has seen a slow-burning war between its forces and Shia and Palestinian militias on the other side. Southern Lebanon is the stronghold of Hezbollah, the powerful, Iran-aligned Shia militia. Militants have launched multiple rocket attacks into northern Israel since October 7 "in solidarity" with Palestinians and Israel has carried out hundreds of retaliatory strikes in Lebanon.

Yanuh-Jat, which was hit by rockets from Lebanon in April 2023, has relatively been quiet in the latest round of conflict. But Asiya is worried that if the tensions escalate on the border, her village, home for over 6,000 people, mostly Druze, would get caught in the war. Like most houses on Israel's border, Asiya's house also has a bunker. She says she has 15 seconds to take shelter once the alarm goes off.

Cross-border attacks

Between October 7 and March 15, Hezbollah, other militias in Lebanon and Israel exchanged at least 4,733 attacks across the border, according to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project (ACLED), a non-profit. Of these, Israel accounted for 83% of the attacks, totalling 3,952 incidents, while Hezbollah, Amal Movement and Palestinian militias launched 781 attacks.

Hezbollah, which fought a month-long war with Israel in 2006, has

Israeli forces check the site that was hit by a Hezbollah rocket in Kiryat Shmona in northern Israel near the Lebanon border. AFP

stated that it would continue attacking Israeli positions as long as the Gaza war continues.

"We have been at war since October 7," said Sarit Zehavi, the founder and president of Alma Research and Education Centre, a think tank focused on Israel's security. Ms. Zehavi, a former Lieutenant Colonel in the Israeli Defence Forces, said Hezbollah is carrying out a well-calculated campaign from Southern Lebanon. "It is not a full-scale war. But Hezbollah has managed to terrorise the whole Upper Galilee region."

According to Alma's research, Hezbollah has carried out over 1,400 attacks on Israel since October 7. Hezbollah militants have used anti-aircraft and anti-tank guns, drones and mortars in these attacks. And Israel's repeated air strikes inside Lebanon targeting Hezbollah positions and commanders did little to deter or blunt Hezbollah's fire power.

After the northern border turned into a war zone, Israel evacuated 43 communities (61,000 people) in the Upper Galilee region. The displacement has added pressure on the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to calm the border region and allow the displaced to go back to their homes.

"Hezbollah has always set their eyes on Upper Galilee. Now they have managed to push Israelis out of the region. Hezbollah's plan is to occupy Galilee," Ms. Zehavi told *The Hindu* at her office in the Galilee region.

Controlled warfare

Despite speculations that Hezbollah would open a second front in the north, the Shia militia group has maintained its controlled warfare against Israel over the past six months. It triggered a cycle of retaliatory strikes. Israeli attacks in Lebanon have killed at least 357 people, since October 7, according to ACLED. On the Israeli side, 22 people lost their lives in attacks from Lebanon.

The situation became worse after Iran's April 14 air attack on Israel. Now, when Israel is preparing its response to Iran, Hezbollah is upping the ante on the border.

"I cannot say how the situation is going to play out. Israel is not interested in a war with Hezbollah. Hezbollah wants to keep the status quo as it benefits them," said Ms. Zehavi. "Israel wants to take the displaced back to their homes. But that's not possible as long as firing continues. And Hezbollah says there will not be a ceasefire unless there is a ceasefire in Gaza. Even if there's a ceasefire, it would only embolden Hezbollah. They could do what Hamas did on October 7 with much more ferocity," she added.

The writer was in Israel as part of a delegation.

Iran tells U.S. it does not seek an 'expansion of tensions' in region

Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian says Iran had communicated with the U.S. 'before and after' its attack on Israel; for Tehran, the April 14 attack was 'final' and 'the matter is concluded'; Isreal has threatened to respond to the strike

Agence France-Presse
TEHRAN

Iran's top diplomat said on Thursday his country has told the United States that it is not seeking escalation after an unprecedented attack on Israel.

The Islamic Republic carried out its first-ever direct attack on Israel, firing drones and missiles on the weekend. The barrage – to which Israel's Army chief has vowed a response – was retaliation for an April 1 air strike on Tehran's consulate in Damascus. Iran blamed Israel for the consular attack.

Critical talk: The UN Security Council meets on the situation in the West Asia, at UN headquarters in New York City on Thursday. AFP

Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, who is in New York to attend a UN Security Council meeting, said his country has "tried to tell the United States clearly" that Iran is "not looking for the expansion of tension in the region," he said in a video posted by his Ministry.

Iran and the United States have had no diplomatic relations since 1980, but neutral Switzerland represents Washington's interests in Iran. Both the U.S. and Iran have alluded to the Swiss role as an intermediary.

According to Mr. Amir-Abdollahian, Iran communicated with Washington "before and after" launching its attack on Israel.

Iran informed the United States that the decision by the Islamic Republic of Iran to "respond to the [Israel] regime is final," and the matter concluded, he said.

The Islamic republic has celebrated the attack as a success but President Ebrahim Raisi warned of "a fierce and severe response" to further "aggression" by Israel.

During his trip to New York, Mr. Amir-Abdollahian is set to meet UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and his counterparts from other countries.

Ukraine says it hit Russian airfield in annexed Crimea

Reuters
KYIV

A Ukrainian attack on a military airfield in Russian-occupied Crimea on Wednesday seriously damaged four missile launchers, three radar stations and other equipment, Ukraine's military spy agency said on Thursday.

Four launchers for S-400 surface-to-air missiles and an air defence control point stationed at an air base in Dzhankoi were among equipment "destroyed or critically damaged", the agency said on Telegram.

It added that the number of aircraft damaged or destroyed as a result of the attack was being clarified.

Ukraine claims to have destroyed four launchers for the S-400 surface-to-air defence system, in its attack on Wednesday. AFP

Several Telegram channels reported powerful blasts in Dzhankoi on Wednesday.

There was no official comment from Russia.

The Ukrainian agency did not provide any data regarding the means used for the strike which it described as "successful". President Volodymyr Zelenskyy earlier thanked military involved in the operation "for precision".

Russian troops have recently stepped up ballistic missiles attacks on Ukraine from Crimea, which Moscow seized and has occupied since 2014.

China's Wang meets Indonesia's Jokowi

Agence France-Presse
JAKARTA

China's top diplomat met Indonesian President Joko Widodo and his successor Prabowo Subianto on Thursday as Beijing seeks to boost its regional influence.

The meetings come after Mr. Prabowo visited Beijing this month where Chinese President Xi Jinping praised relations with Jakarta, laying out a vision for regional peace as tensions rise between Beijing and other Southeast Asian neighbours – including the Philippines over the disputed South China Sea.

Indonesian Defence Minister Prabowo stormed to a first-round majority victory in Indonesia's presidential election in February. He has voiced support for developing closer ties with Beijing. China's Wang Yi also met Indonesian counterpart Retno Marsudi earlier on Thursday before visiting Mr. Widodo, more popularly known as Jokowi, at the presidential palace and then Mr. Prabowo at the Defence Ministry.

Joint drills

Ms. Retno said Mr. Jokowi and Mr. Wang expressed their desire for regional peace and stability, and repeated calls for a de-escalation and ceasefire in Gaza between Israel and Hamas.

Indonesia's Defence Ministry issued a statement noting the two sides discussed training cooperation and joint exercises, without specifying details.

China is one of the biggest sources of foreign direct investment in Indonesia and has poured billions of dollars into projects.

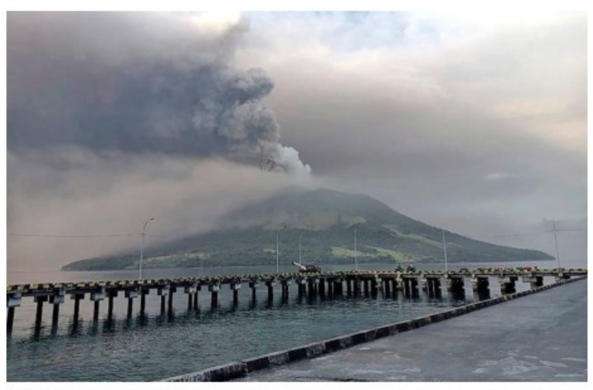
Indonesia evacuates thousands after volcano erupts, raises tsunami threat

Agence France-Presse
MANADO

Indonesian rescuers raced to evacuate thousands of people on Thursday after a volcano erupted five times, forcing authorities to close a nearby airport and issue a warning about falling debris that could cause a tsunami.

Mount Ruang's crater flamed with lava against a backdrop of lightning bolts overnight after erupting four times on Wednesday, pushing an ash column more than a mile into the sky and forcing authorities to raise its alert level to the highest of a four-tiered system.

Taka, a local fisherman who only gave one name, was at sea helping people to safety by boat when the crater unleashed a fiery



Catastrophic activity: Mount Ruang volcano in Indonesia, during a series of eruptions on Wednesday. AP

orange column. The volcano, which sits on a remote island in Indonesia's outermost region with a peak 725 metres above sea level, was still billowing a column of smoke up to 800 metres high on Thursday morning, officials said.

Houses on the neighbouring remote island of Tagulandang were riddled with holes from falling volcanic rocks on Thursday, rescuers said.

"The current condition, particularly the road condition, is covered by volcanic material," local rescuer Ikram Al Ulah said the Tagulandang seaport.

There were no reports of deaths or injuries but authorities said they were rushing to evacuate more than 11,000 residents from the area around Tagulandang, home to around 20,000 people.

Authorities also evacuated a prison on Tagulandang island, ferrying 17 inmates along with 11 officials and 19 residents by boat to Likupang seaport in northern Sulawesi island.

Authorities also warned of a possible tsunami as a result of the eruptions.

Indonesia, a vast archipelago nation, experiences frequent seismic and volcanic activity due to its position on the Pacific "Ring of Fire", an arc where tectonic plates collide that stretches from Japan through Southeast Asia and across the Pacific basin.

MAHATRANSCO
Maharashtra State Electricity Transmission Co. Ltd.

CORRIGENDUM

In continuation to this office RFx (e-Tender) Notice dated 23.02.2024, the sale and submission date for the
RFx. No. 7000030038 is extended as below :
Date of download & online submission of e-tender document is extended upto 07.05.2024 upto 15.00 Hrs.
All other Terms and Condition will remain unchanged. For detailed information visit our website: https://srmetender.mahatransco.in.

-Sd-
CHIEF ENGINEER, EHV PC (O&M) Zone, **Vashi**

SBI **STATE BANK OF INDIA** | Circle Security Department, Local Head Office, Bank Street, Koti, Hyderabad-500095. Ph.No.040-23466361

NIT No. HYD/CSO/CCTV-BACS/2024-25/001 Dated 19.04.2024

EMPANELMENT OF MANUFACTURERS / FIRMS / COMPANIES / DEALERS / VENDORS FOR PROVISIONING OF CCTV SYSTEM & BIOMETRIC ACCESS CONTROL SYSTEM (BACS) AND MAINTENANCE OF EXISTING SYSTEM IN THE BRANCHES / OFFICES IN THE STATE OF TELANGANA

SBI, LHO, Hyderabad invites Expression of Interest (EOI) from eligible, competent and resourceful security equipment vendors for participating in tender forprovisioning & maintenance of CCTV System & Biometric Access Control System for the Bank's establishments in the geographical area of Telangana State. For details please visit website **www.sbi.co.in** under 'Procurement News' from **19.04.2024, 3:00 PM onwards. Last date of submission of tender is 10.05.2024 upto 3:00 P.M.** Corrigendum/Amendment, if any, would be posted on the website only. Hence, prospective applicants are advised to visit website regularly for above purpose.

Place: Hyderabad, Date: 19-04-2024 Circle Security Officer

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CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF IMAGING TECHNOLOGY (C-DIT)
Thiruvallam, Thiruvananthapuram-27
Ph: 0471-2380910/912/895

Invitation for Expression of Interest

CDIT invites expression of interest (EOI)for the "**SECTOR SYNERGY TRAINING PARTNER (SSTP)**".

Last date for submission of EOI : **20.05.2024,5.00PM**
for details visit: www.cdit.org

18.04.2024 Registrar, C-DIT

HURTING ALL-ROUNDERS

Rohit not in favour of the Impact Player rule

R.V. MOORTHY

India skipper Rohit Sharma is not a big fan of the Impact Player rule. The rule allows teams to substitute a player during their innings. But, it has raised eyebrows given that someone like Shivam Dube has only been used as a power-hitter by CSK. "I genuinely feel that it is going to hold back (development of India all-rounders)," said Rohit.

MORE GAME TIME

Pant's mobility will give him encouragement: Pietersen

VIJAY SONEJI

Former England captain Kevin Pietersen feels Rishabh Pant and the Indian team management should feel very encouraged by the comeback-man's mobility in the game against Gujarat Titans as the T20 World Cup draws closer. "His mobility will give him great encouragement, which will also encourage Team India," he said.

NEW FACE

Super Kings name Gleeson as replacement for injured Conway

GETTY IMAGES

Chennai Super Kings has named English pacer Richard Gleeson as replacement for the injured Devon Conway. Gleeson, for whom it would be a maiden outing in the league, is joining the five-time champion for his base price of ₹50 lakh. Gleeson has 101 wickets in 90 T20 outings at an economy-rate of 8.18, including a five-for.

HUMANE GESTURE

BCCI hosts cancer and thalassemia patients during GT-DC contest

SPORTZPICS/IPL

The BCCI hosted 12,000 cancer and thalassemia patients as "special invitees" during the IPL match between GT and DC at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on Wednesday. BCCI secretary Jay Shah welcomed the "special invitees", including blood donors and blood donation camp organisers, a release said.

Mumbai survives gallant Punjab's rearguard action

Hardik's men eke out a nine-run win after Ashutosh, Harpreet Brar raise the host's hopes with a late surge; Shashank does his bit again; Suryakumar conjures up some innovative shots for the visitor

IPL-17

Dhruva Prasad
MULLANPUR

On the 16th anniversary of the Indian Premier League (IPL), the tournament witnessed one of the most dramatic scripts that the crash, bang, wallop of T20 cricket can serve as Mumbai Indians pipped Punjab Kings by nine runs at the Maharaja Yadavindra Singh International Cricket Stadium here on Thursday.

With the top and middle-order razed, Ashutosh Sharma and Harpreet Brar threatened to turn the match on its head in a 10-ball 16th over, preying on Akash Madhwal's fuller lengths. The over cost Mumbai 24 runs and left Punjab needing a comfortable 28 from four overs.

Jasprit Bumrah was still left with one over and the duo duly rode it out with three singles. But the ensuing shift in momentum had Ashutosh pulling the next over's first delivery, bowled by Gerald Coetzee, straight to deep mid-wicket.

Fate gave Madhwal a second chance and helped him out when Kagiso Rabada was run out off the second ball of the last over, off which Punjab needed 12 with one wicket left.

With Ashutosh almost taking Punjab over the line, and Shashank Singh injecting the first ray of hope with a 25-ball 41 after the home side was reduced to 14 for four, the uncapped Indian duo was yet again left to do the heavy-lifting. Though the match ebbed and flowed, Punjab's batting woes persisted and Jasprit Bumrah's two-wicket first over, which accounted for Rilee Roussou and Sam Curran, only made matters worse.

Earlier, Suryakumar Yadav continued to play Russian roulette, notching up a 53-ball 78 (7x4, 3x6) after scores of 0, 52, 0. The right-hander, though not at his most destructive, was still inventive with his shot-making.

With Mumbai going on the rampage in the late-overs after Suryakumar and Rohit Sharma's 81-run stand for the second wicket, it was Harshal Patel, Punjab's most profligate fast-bowler this year, who put the skids on the opposition by conceding just three runs in the final over.

Harshal mixed the yorkers and bouncers judiciously with his changes of pace to keep the batters guessing. Liam Livingstone and Brar conceded only 37 runs in five overs of spin and kept Mumbai below 200, which was still too much for the home side.

Joy and relief: The Mumbai Indians players had a lot to smile about after pulling off their third win of the campaign. R.V. MOORTHY

SCOREBOARD

MUMBAI INDIANS
Ishan Kishan c Harpreet Brar b Rabada 8 *(8b, 1x4)*, Rohit Sharma c Harpreet Brar b Curran 36 *(25b, 2x4, 3x6)*, Suryakumar Yadav c Prabhsimran b Curran 78 *(53b, 7x4, 3x6)*, Tilak Varma (not out) 34 *(18b, 2x4, 2x6)*, Hardik Pandya c Harpreet Brar b Harshal 10 *(6b, 1x6)*, Tim David c Curran b Harshal 14 *(7b, 2x4, 1x6)*, Romario Shepherd c Shashank b Harshal 1 *(2b)*, Mohammad Nabi run out 0 *(1b)*; Extras (b-1, lb-5, w-5): 11; Total (for seven wkts. in 20 overs): 192.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-18 (Kishan, 2.1 overs), 2-99 (Rohit, 11.4), 3-148 (Suryakumar, 16.2), 4-167 (Hardik, 17.6), 5-190 (David, 19.2), 6-192 (Shepherd, 19.5), 7-192 (Nabi, 19.6).

PUNJAB KINGS BOWLING
Livingstone 2-0-16-0, Arshdeep 3-0-35-0, Rabada 4-0-42-1, Harshal 4-0-31-3, Curran 4-0-41-2, Harpreet Brar 3-0-21-0.

PUNJAB KINGS
Sam Curran c Kishan b Bumrah 6 *(7b, 1x4)*, Prabhsimran Singh c Kishan b Coetzee 0 *(1b)*, Rilee Rossouw b Bumrah 1 *(3b)*, Liam Livingstone c & b Coetzee 1 *(2b)*, Harpreet Bhatia (**Impact Player in place of Arshdeep**) c & b Shreyas Gopal 13 *(15b, 2x4)*, Shashank Singh c Tilak b Bumrah 41 *(25b, 2x4, 3x6)*, Jitesh Sharma lbw b Madhwal 9 *(9b, 1x4)*, Ashutosh Sharma c Nabi b Coetzee 61 *(28b, 2x4, 7x6)*, Harpreet Brar c Nabi b Hardik 21 *(20b, 2x4, 1x6)*, Harshal Patel (not out) 1 *(4b)*, Kagiso Rabada run out 8 *(3b, 1x6)*; Extras (lb-5, nb-2, w-14): 21; Total (in 19.1 overs): 183.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-10 (Prabhsimran, 0.3), 2-13 (Rossouw, 1.4), 3-14 (Curran, 1.6), 4-14 (Livingstone, 2.1), 5-49 (Harpreet Bhatia, 6.5), 6-77 (Jitesh, 9.2), 7-111 (Shashank, 12.1), 8-168 (Ashutosh, 17.1), 9-174 (Harpreet Brar, 18.4).

MUMBAI INDIANS BOWLING
Coetzee 4-0-32-3, Bumrah 4-0-21-3, Madhwal (**Impact Player in place of Suryakumar**) 3.1-0-46-1, Hardik 4-0-33-1, Shreyas Gopal 2-0-26-1, Shepherd 2-0-20-0.
Toss: PBKS; **PoM:** Bumrah.
MI won by nine runs.

Next assignment

PBKS: April 21 vs **GT**
Mullanpur, 7.30 p.m.

MI: April 22 vs **RR**
Jaipur, 7.30 p.m.

Points Table

	M	W	L	PTS	NRR
Rajasthan Royals	7	6	1	12	0.677
Kolkata Knight Riders	6	4	2	8	1.399
Chennai Super Kings	6	4	2	8	0.726
Sunrisers Hyderabad	6	4	2	8	0.502
Lucknow Super Giants	6	3	3	6	0.038
Delhi Capitals	7	3	4	6	-0.074
Mumbai Indians	7	3	4	6	-0.133
Gujarat Titans	7	3	4	6	-1.303
Punjab Kings	7	2	5	4	-0.251
Royal Challengers	7	1	6	2	-1.185

After the PBKS-MI match on April 18

Super Giants will need to bring their A game against Super Kings

Cruise mode: CSK is coming off impressive wins against KKR and MI. SANDEEP SAXENA

P.K. Ajith Kumar
LUCKNOW

Lucknow Super Giants lost the last two matches it played. Chennai Super Kings won both it played.

It isn't hard to see which team is in better form ahead of their IPL match at the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Stadium on Friday. CSK looked rather impressive in the wins against Kolkata Knight Riders at home and then against Mumbai Indians away.

LSG, on the other hand, has had a couple of disappointing matches, struggling with both bat and ball against Delhi Capitals and KKR.

Before those two defeats, K.L. Rahul's men had recorded three wins in a row. The man who won them the first two then got injured.

Mayank Yadav, the find of the season, was missed in the last two games. When LSG's assistant coach Lance Klusener was asked about the availability of the fast bowler for Thursday's match, he said the decision on the eleven had not yet been taken.

LSG could take just six wickets in all from the last two matches.

West Indian star fast bowler Shamar Joseph's debut was also underwhelming – nought for 47 against KKR.

Batting needs to click too, though it cannot be easy against a strong CSK attack featuring bowlers like Mustafizur Rahman, Matheesha Pathirana and Ravindra Jadeja. More is expected from the top order, featuring the likes of Rahul and Quinton de Kock, and there should be less dependence on Nicholas Pooran.

CSK doesn't have as many worries with batting, given the form Shivam Dubey and captain Ruturaj Gaikwad are in.

Today's match

LUCKNOW SUPER GIANTS vs. CHENNAI SUPER KINGS

Lucknow, 7.30 p.m.

HEAD-TO-HEAD
PLAYED: 3
LSG 1 | CSK 1 | NR 1

PREVIOUS MEETING
No result, 2023

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 (SD & HD) & JIO CINEMA

In the IPL, there is no time to be comfortable: Fleming

P.K. Ajith Kumar
LUCKNOW

Chennai Super Kings coach Stephen Fleming is particularly pleased with the way his boys have fielded this season. "We have taken some outstanding catches and our outfielding has been good," he said at a press conference ahead of CSK's match against Lucknow Super Giants.

He is pleased that the team has won four games, and the last two in a row, but doesn't want to feel too comfortable. "All we want to do is to repeat what we did well and there were some good things for us in the last game in Mumbai against Mumbai Indians," he said. "In the IPL, there is no time to be comfortable. If you feel comfortable, you make mistakes."

Ruturaj. SANDEEP SAXENA

Fleming is backing Daryl Mitchell. "He has been contributing without giving star performances," he said. "We like to back players a lot and it is not always the Man-of-the-Match performance that we value the most."

LSG's assistant coach Lance Klusener said his team wanted to get the momentum back again, following the two losses. "We had a nice momentum with our three straight wins," he said. "Now we need to get back good performances not just in Thursday's game but the next 10 days or so."

Top guns

In T20s, it's all about going bang, bang right from the first delivery. A look at some players who have walked the talk in the 17th edition of the IPL

	Inns	Runs	Balls Faced	HS	SR
Karthik (RCB)	6	226	110	83	205.45
Ashutosh (PBKS)	4	156	76	61	205.26
Russell (KKR)	4	128	64	64*	200.00
Klaasen (SRH)	6	253	127	80*	199.21
Head (SRH)	5	235	118	102	199.15
Abhishek (SRH)	6	211	107	63	197.19
Stubbs (DC)	6	189	99	71*	190.90
Narine (KKR)	6	276	147	109	187.75
Shashank (PBKS)	7	187	104	61*	179.80
Kishan (MI)	7	192	111	69	172.97

**minimum 50 balls | After the PBKS-MI match on April 18*

COMPILED BY SHREYA SINGH AND PRAVEENA DEVARAJ

Race for the caps

ORANGE

	Inns	Runs	HS	SR	100s/50s
Kohli (RCB)	7	361	113*	147.34	1/2
Parag (RR)	7	318	84*	161.42	0/3
Rohit (MI)	7	297	105*	164.08	1/0

PURPLE

	Inns	Wkts	BB	Econ	4W/5W
Bumrah (MI)	7	13	5/21	5.96	0/1
Chahal (RR)	7	12	3/11	8.34	0/0
Coetzee (MI)	7	12	4/34	9.92	1/0

After the PBKS-MI match on April 18

It would be great playing Tests against Pakistan: Rohit

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

India captain Rohit Sharma says he wouldn't mind playing Tests against Pakistan at a neutral venue as it would be a "great contest" against the "superb bowling line-up" of the arch-rivals.

"I believe that they are a good team, superb bowling line-up, good contest, if we play overseas. The last Test was played in 2007-08," Rohit said.

"I would love to (play against Pakistan), it would be a great contest between two sides. We play them in ICC trophies, pure cricket I am looking at, great contest, so why not?" he replied when asked whether India-Pakistan Tests are possible at neutral venues.

On Thursday, the first T20I between Pakistan and New Zealand at Rawalpindi was washed out. The Kiwis were two for one in two balls when the match was called off due to rain.

INBRIEF

Former England cricketer Raman Subba Row no more

Former England men's Test cricketer and international referee Raman Subba Row has passed away at the age of 92. At the time of his death, he was England's oldest living men's cricketer. He played 13 Tests between 1958 and 1961, scoring 984 runs with three centuries. Row was named one of the *Wisden* 'cricketers of the year' for 1961. He also served as the chairman of the England cricket board and as a match referee oversaw 160 Tests and ODIs. In 1991, Row was awarded a CBE for services to the game.

Salunkhe puts it across Thanusaa, in quarterfinals

India's Akanksha Salunkhe defeated Malaysia's Thanusaa Uthrian 11-7, 8-11, 11-3, 7-11, 11-5 in the opening round of the Asian Qualifying event for the World sqaush championship in Kuala Lumpur on Thursday. Akanksha, the 2023 National Games champion will meet another Malaysian, Sehveetrraa Kumar, in the quarterfinals on Friday.

Former World No. 1 Momota to retire after Thomas Cup

Japan's two-time World champion and former World No.1 Kento Momota said on Thursday that he is retiring from badminton after the Thomas Cup, following his failure to qualify for the Paris Olympics. Momota won the World titles in 2018 and 2019 but struggled to return to top form after being injured in a vehicle accident in Malaysia in early 2020 when the van he was travelling in crashed. Momota was left with double vision and needed surgery to repair a fractured eye socket after the crash.

Anirudh Chandrasekar in Challenger quarterfinals

Anirudh Chandrasekar and Hans Verdugo of Mexico beat Charles Broom and Adam Walton 4-6, 6-4, [11-9] in the doubles pre-quarterfinals of the $164,000 Challenger tennis tournament in Acapulco, Mexico. In the $40,000 ITF women's event in Shenzhen, China, Rutuja Bhosale lost 7-5, 6-3 to Liu Fangzhou of China in the pre-quarterfinals.

The results: $164,000 Challenger, Acapulco: Doubles: Pre-quarterfinals: Antoine Bellier & Luca Sanchez bt Arjun Kadhe & Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan 6-3, 3-6, [10-7]; Anirudh Chandrasekar & Hans Verdugo bt Charles Broom & Adam Walton 4-6, 6-4, [11-9].
$25,000 ITF men, Hammamet, Tunisia: Doubles: Quarterfinals: Constantin Kouzmine & Oleksandr Ovcharenko bt Cian Maguire & Rohan Mehra 6-1, 6-7(4), [16-14]. **Pre-quarterfinals:** Cian & Rohan bt Aryan Singh & Alexander Zgirovsky 5-7, 6-2, [10-8].
$15,000 ITF, Shymkent, Kazakhstan: Men: Pre-quarterfinals: Dev Javia bt Jordi Mestre 6-2, 6-4; Karan Singh bt Ruslan Kastsiukevich 2-6, 6-3, 6-4; Eric Vanshelboim bt Aryan Sshah 6-3, 7-5; Bekhan Atlangeriev bt Yuvan Nandal 6-1, 6-2. **Doubles: Quarterfinals:** Maxim Shin & Maxim Zhukov bt S.D. Prajewal Dev & Sai Karteek Reddy 7-6(5), 7-5. **Women: Pre-quarterfinals:** Anna Ureke bt Ashmitha Easwaramurthi 6-0, 7-5. **Doubles: Quarterfinals:** Ureke & Valeriya Yushchenko bt Ashmitha & Elina Nepliy 6-0, 6-3.
$40,000 ITF women, Shenzhen: Pre-quarterfinals: Liu Fangzhou bt Rutuja Bhosale 7-5, 6-3.

Stuart Law named new head coach of USA cricket team

Twenty20 World Cup host USA has named Stuart Law as head coach, US cricket officials said, with the Australian calling it "an exciting opportunity". The 55-year-old former batter takes charge of the team ahead of a three-match home T20 series against Bangladesh next month.The length of Law's contract was not revealed.

LIVE TELECAST

IPL: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema, 7.30 p.m.
Bundesliga: Sony Sports Ten 2 (SD & HD) & LIV, 12 a.m. (Saturday)
Serie A: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema, 10 p.m. & 12.15 a.m. (Saturday)
LaLiga: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema, 12.30 a.m. (Saturday)

Nepo gets the better of Gujrathi, regains sole lead

Gukesh held by Caruana, shares second spot with Nakamura who puts it past Praggnanandhaa; Humpy and Vaishali register victories

CANDIDATES CHESS

Sports Bureau

Ian Nepomniachtchi scored a significant win against Vidit Gujrathi and regained the sole lead in the 11th round of the Candidates chess tournament at Toronto on Wednesday. The Russian's closest rival and fellow overnight leader D. Gukesh slipped to second place after drawing with top seed Fabiano Caruana of the United States.

Second-seeded American Hikaru Nakamura was sharing that position with Gukesh after beating R. Praggnanandhaa. Nepomniachtchi had seven points, while Gukesh and Nakamura were on 6.5. Caruana is lying fourth with six points. Three rounds remain.

In the women's tournament, China's Tan Zhongyi also regained the sole lead, defeating Russian Kateryna Lagno.

Her compatriot and fellow overnight leader Lei Tingjie dropped to second place after drawing with Anna Muzychuk.

Tan was on seven points, half-a-point ahead of Lei. It was a good day for both the Indian women. Koneru Humpy defeated Bulgaria's Nurgyul Salimova, while R. Vaishali shocked Aleksandra Goryachkina.

Humpy, with 5.5 points, shared third place along with Goryachkina and Lagno. Vaishali was on 4.5 points.

Gritty show: Vaishali demonstrated a fighting mentality to best Goryachkina. FIDE

Missing the advantage

Gujrathi, playing from the white side of a Petrov's Defence, had to pay for his inaccurate moves, as he went down in 67 moves to Nepomniachtchi.

The Indian had an advantageous position, and then missed the chance to force a draw.

Gukesh and Caruana drew after 40 moves of Queen's Gambit Declined. The American, with black pieces, got the half-point through perpetual checks with his queen.

Praggnanandhaa and Nakamura's Queen's Pawn Game reached an early end-game, in which the Indian, with white pieces, struggled after playing a bit too ambitiously. He resigned after 54 moves: he had just three pawns against Nakamura's rook, bishop and pawn.

The results (11th round):
Open: Vidit Gujrathi 5 lost to Ian Nepomniachtchi (FIDE) 7; D. Gukesh 6.5 drew with Fabiano Caruana (USA) 6; R. Praggnanandhaa 5.5 lost to Hikaru Nakamura (USA) 6.5; Alireza Firouzja (Fra) 4.5 bt Nijat Abasov (Aze) 3.
Women: Tan Zhongyi (Chn) 7.5 bt Kateryna Lagno (FIDE) 5.5; Lei Tingjie (Chn) 7 drew with Anna Muzychuk (Ukr) 4.5; Koneru Humpy 5.5 bt Nurgyul Salimova (Bul) 4; R. Vaishali 4.5 bt Aleksandra Goryachkina (FIDE) 5.5.

daCunha/AB/938

Odisha and Blasters face off to decide third semifinal spot

ISL

Sports Bureau
BHUBANESWAR

Odisha FC and Kerala Blasters FC will meet in the first match of the Indian Super League (ISL) 2023-24 playoffs at the Kalinga Stadium on Friday.

Both teams entered the knockouts in identical fashion, winning and drawing one each and losing thrice in their previous five games.

Odisha finished fourth in the table with 39 points and Kerala Blasters fifth (33).

The winner of Friday's playoff will join Mumbai City FC and Mohun Bagan Super Giants, which finished in the top-2, in the semifinals. FC Goa will play Chennaiyin FC for the fourth semifinal spot.

Odisha has tasted success only twice in its last seven games against Kerala Blasters, but won 2-1 in their previous encounter. This will be the teams' first meeting in the playoffs.

Kerala Blasters, too, doesn't have a good against Odisha, having never won an away fixture against the Juggernauts. It has lost in its last two visits to the Kalinga Stadium.

Knee injury ends Sreeshankar's Olympics dream

ATHLETICS

Stan Rayan
KOCHI

Long jumper M. Sreeshankar, the Commonwealth Games and Asian Games silver medallist, has injured his knee and will miss the Paris Olympics.

"He injured his left knee, the take-off knee, while training at Palakkad on Tuesday evening.

"There was no inkling that something like this would happen, it happened during a short pop-up jump. He sat down on the pit immediately," S. Murali, Sreeshankar's father who is also his coach, told *The Hindu* on Thursday.

"He has been taken to the Kokilaben Hospital in Mumbai...they say he needs surgery and it could take about one and half years to regain his old form."

Sreeshankar, the No. 2 in the World long jump list midway through last year with a personal best 8.41m, tweeted about the injury and said it felt like a nightmare.

Sreeshankar says the setback feels like a nightmare. FILE PHOTO: RITU RAJ KONWAR

"All my life, I've had the courage to look at a setback in the eye, accept situations I can't change, and work hard at dictating the outcomes of those I can. Unfortunately, in what feels like a nightmare, but is a reality, my Paris Olympic Games dream is over," said Sreeshankar.

The 25-year-old from Palakkad had made the cut for the Paris Olympics as soon as the qualification doors opened on July 1, 2023, winning the Asian Championship silver in Bangkok with 8.37m (Olympic entry standard 8.27m) on July 15.

Sreeshankar, who had finished third in the Paris Diamond League last year, had planned to open his season at the Shanghai Diamond League next week but the injury has now brought his season to an early close.

"My journey to a comeback began the minute I injured my knee. This road is going to be long, difficult and will take a lot out of me. The good thing is, I have a lot to give. I will overcome this, because that's what Mamba Mentality is all about," said the long jumper who idolises the late NBA basketball legend Kobe Bryant.

All eyes on Vinesh as she targets ticket to Paris

WRESTLING

Y.B. Sarangi
KOLKATA

Vinesh Phogat will attract the maximum attention among Indian wrestlers, who will be vying for Paris Olympics quota places in the Asian Olympic Games qualifier starting in Bishkek on Friday.

Vinesh, who competed in the Tokyo Olympics in 53kg, dropped to 50kg for the trials after Antim Panghal secured the 53kg quota place by winning a World championship bronze last year. The lack of clarity whether she would be able to challenge Antim (as the quota place belongs to the country) made Vinesh take the decision.

The 29-year-old two-time Olympian will have North Korea's Son Hyang Kim and Uzbekistan's Aktenge Keunimjaeva, among others, in her weight. Japan, China and Mongolia have already booked their spots in the Olympics.

New category: Vinesh, who competed in the Tokyo Olympics in 53kg, has dropped to 50kg for the trials. FILE PHOTO

According to experts, the major challenge for Vinesh, who won the National at Jaipur in 55kg in February, would be to sustain her energy through the bouts even after cutting down her weight to fit into 50kg. There was a two kg weight relaxation at the trials in March.

Anshu Malik (57kg) and Reetika (76kg) will be the other contenders for Olympic berths. Aman Sehrawat (57kg) and Tokyo Olympics fifth-place finisher Deepak Punia (86kg), a former Worlds silver medallist, can also earn quota places.

The biggest hurdle for India is that Deepak and Sujeet Kalkal (65kg), on their way from Dagestan to Bishkek, have been stranded at the Dubai airport since Tuesday due to the massive flooding there.

The semifinalists in each weight will win Olympic slots. The World Olympic Games qualifier in Istanbul from May 9 is the last qualifying event for Paris 2024.

Real weathers a City surge to progress; Bayern dumps Arsenal

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Associated Press
MANCHESTER

Real Madrid advanced to the semifinals of the Champions League after beating Manchester 4-3 on penalties at Etihad Stadium on Wednesday.

Antonio Rudiger struck the decisive spot kick after the game had finished 1-1 through extra time and 4-4 on aggregate.

Bernardo Silva and Mateo Kovacic both saw their penalties saved in the shootout as defending champion City was eliminated by record 14-time winner Madrid.

Rodrygo fired Madrid ahead in the 12th minute with a twice-taken effort from close range to beat City goalkeeper Ederson on the rebound.

City dominated the game from then on with Kevin De Bruyne leveling in the 76th by lifting a shot high into the net from close range.

City immediately took advantage in the shootout after Julian Alvarez converted his opening penalty and Luka Modric's effort was saved.

But Madrid keeper Andriy Lunin then saved successive spot kicks from Silva and Kovacic to swing the balance in the visitors' favor.

Defeat ended City's bid to become the first English team to win back-to-back Champions League titles and its pursuit of successive trebles.

Joshua Kimmich's header powered Bayern Munich to a 1-0 win over Arsenal to reach the semifinals with a 3-2 victory on aggregate.

With the score at 2-2 from the first leg in London, Kimmich's header off Raphael Guerreiro's pinpoint cross put Bayern ahead in the 63rd minute as Bayern largely neutralised the English team's attack.

The results (quarterfinals, second legs): Bayern Munich 1 (Kimmich 63) bt Arsenal 0 (*Bayern wins 3-2 on aggregate*); Manchester City 1 (De Bruyne 76) drew with Real Madrid 1 (Rodrygo 12) (*after extra-time 4-4 on aggregate; Real wins 4-3 on penalties*).

Semifinal line-up: Borussia Dortmund v PSG; Bayern v Real (first leg: April 30 / May 1, second leg: May 7 / 8).

Big miss: Silva's poorly taken spot kick is saved by Real goalkeeper Lunin. AP